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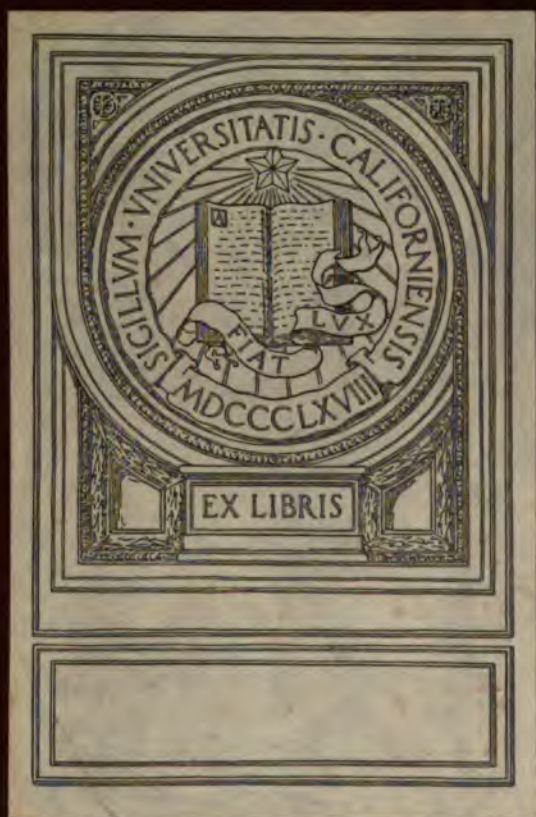
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REMINISCENCES OF A FALCONER

MAJOR C. H. FISHER

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1907



Charles H. Johnson

REMINISCENCES OF A FALCONER

BY

MAJOR CHARLES HAWKINS FISHER
OF THE CASTLE, STROUD, GLOSTER

WITH SEVEN PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES
AND SIX PORTRAITS

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO THE
AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTION

AFTER a life already four years longer than "the allotted time of man," and now, alas! approaching its close—a life in which I have devoted much time to hunting, shooting, fishing, archery, and falconry—I find myself thrown back upon my recollections of the past for a little solace in much physical suffering.

I recovered from a severe fall, when out hunting many years ago, only to find myself, after many a trial and many a vain hope, never likely to stand the strain of crossing a country as near as I could wish to the tail of hounds. After this accident, shooting and archery very much monopolised my attention; but I was weaned away from both, and my thoughts and desires were directed to falconry, the old sport of our ancestors, in a way that I shall venture briefly to describe.

One day, in the year 1858, I had missed a train at Thetford, in Norfolk, when returning to my home in Gloucestershire. Having at least a couple of hours to spare before the next train could arrive, I went for a stroll into the country around the railway station—a district which is certainly peculiar, the soil being of an extremely sandy character, with so little cohesion, that I have seen the seedling turnips blown

out of the ground by the wind, and with so little nourishment that it is a common thing to find a plantation of Scotch firs standing all dead and lifeless. That country is the natural home of the partridge, and game-preserving is there the order of the day. I was interested on that occasion to find that the plantations of firs, which stood up dead and bare in scattered clumps, were frequently utilised for game coverts, by the loppings of greener and more fortunate trees being scattered as underwood profusely amongst them.

I soon found myself in a lane leading to a few lone hamlets, the names of which were unknown to me. As a quaint little inn presented itself, and I was in want of lunch, I gladly walked towards it. Judge of my surprise when, on nearing the house, I saw, for the first time in my life, a hawk's cadge (or frame) as used by our ancestors, and exactly as their descendants use it now, standing on its four legs, and with the cadge-man's braces dependent from it; while on and around the frame itself were perched, motionless, five or six hooded hawks, which I was able to determine must be peregrine falcons of various ages.

The falconer's cadge with its hawks, as depicted in an admirable picture by Landseer called "The Return from Hawking," is well known to most of us, and an engraving of it hangs on the wall of the library in which I am writing. It may interest some who know that picture to learn that the hooded falcon which an ideal cadge-man is there seen to be holding up on his gloved hand

(apparently for the infant child of Lord Ellesmere to see), was a hawk which, some time after the date of which I am writing, became well known to me. She sat for her picture with the others which belonged to the Duke of St. Albans, the Hereditary Grand Falconer of England, and were, for the time being, in charge of his deputy, Mr. John Pells, son of the well-known Dutch professional falconer Jan Pells (or Peels), who had long been in service with Lord Berners, the Duke of Leeds, and Mr. Clough Newcome—all members of the Loo Hawking Club when it flourished under the presidency of Prince Alexander of the Netherlands.

I asked the cadge-man, who was lounging in the porch of the inn, to whom the hawks belonged. He surlily replied, "to Mr. Pells," and seemed disinclined to give further particulars.

I made my way to the bar, and there in the neat little sanded parlour I found two men sitting and enjoying their pipes, the one being evidently the landlord, the other as obviously the falconer in charge of the hawks.

"Are those hawks yours, and are you the falconer?" asked I.

"I am, sir," he replied; "deputy-falconer of the Duke of St. Albans, Grand Falconer of England, at your service."

I learned from him that he was then living in the Norfolk village of Feltwell, some eight or ten miles distant, and had been having a day's sport at partridges on the land of one of the neighbouring gentry, the country round Brandon and Thetford

being open, with few trees or fences, and admirably suited to partridge hawking, which in such a district is, in many a falconer's opinion, second only to grouse hawking.

As a boy my fancies had early been directed towards falconry by receiving, as a present, a copy of "The Gentleman's Recreation," a compilation relating, indeed, to other sports in addition to falconry, viz., hunting, fishing, and fowling, adorned with many quaint woodcuts; but I did not then know that this fine old sport of our ancestors had never been extinct in the eastern counties, many parts of which are so well adapted to the pursuit of its finest flight, viz., that at the noble heron; still less did I ever expect to meet a falconer with a cadge of live hooded hawks actually engaged in its practice.

It ended in the way that might have been expected with one so keenly interested. After what I had seen, and what Pells promised to show me, I telegraphed home that I was not to be expected there just yet, and when the *séance* in the inn parlour to which I was admitted had come to an end, Pells sent his light cart to the station for my luggage, and he, his hawks, his man, and I seated ourselves therein, and slowly wended our way to Pells's home in the distant village of Feltwell.

As we drove into that village, Pells triumphantly pointed out to me three or four motionless figures of birds seated on the stone parapets of the old church, and which I needed not to be told were hawks. They were "eyesses" or nestling falcons

being brought up in a state of perfect liberty, or, as it is technically termed, "flying at hack."

On reaching the village, John Pells, thinking that I could not possibly endure the local inn, kindly offered to put me up, in which offer he was joined by his excellent wife; and finally I had my supper that night, and slept in a good bed, in a Norfolk village of which I had never previously heard, and with the hawks which I had so often wished to see sitting alive and well on a falconer's pole not very far off.

And so, by the merest chance, from that time forth a new chapter in life was opened to me, destined to occupy and interest and claim my keenest attention until its close.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to set down some of my reminiscences as a falconer, in the hope that they may be acceptable to those who have already had some experience of the sport, and encouraging to others who may be inclined to take it up. Certes, this ancient field-sport is a fascinating one, and deserves all that has been said of it by the old writers. On the part of the falconer, no doubt, it requires the exercise of much gentleness, patience, and skill, as well as attention to the proper mode of procedure. This has all been sufficiently explained by several of my friends, whose books will be found mentioned in the following pages. My share of the business has been rather to show what may be accomplished by daily practice in the field; and by now relating such incidents in a falconer's life as have come within

my own personal experience, I shall hope to impart to others some share in the enjoyment which I have myself derived from it.

It only remains to tender my acknowledgments to those who have aided and encouraged me in this undertaking. To my old friend, J. E. Harting, who has long urged the production of this volume, I am especially indebted for his unwearied assistance in its preparation, and my thanks are also due to an enthusiastic young naturalist, Mr. C. A. Wittchell (the author of "The Evolution of Bird Song"), whose skill as a shorthand writer has enabled me to dictate to him what would otherwise have cost me much labour to produce.

Should a certain amount of repetition be detected by an attentive reader, it must be attributed to the fact that the chapters have been composed at long intervals; many of them during a period of much physical suffering, not conducive to that elegance of style which is looked for now-a-days by the literary critic.

C. HAWKINS FISHER.

STROUD, *30th June 1900.*

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REV. GAGE EARLE FRBEMAN

"PEREGRINE" OF *The Field*

AUTHOR OF "PRACTICAL FALCONRY" AND "FALCONRY, ITS CLAIMS,
HISTORY, AND PRACTICE"

(APRIL 1881)



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REMINISCENCES OF A FALCONER

THE REVIVAL OF FALCONRY

A PRIZE ESSAY WRITTEN IN 1871¹

"A fat hawk makes a lean horse, a tired falconer, and an empty purse."—
(*Old hawking proverb.*—LATHAM.)

IN accepting the invitation of the Barnet Committee for promoting the opening of the Alexandra Park, and preparing, as desired by them, an essay on the best method of reviving the old sport of Falconry, and again rendering it attractive, and another incentive to the study of Natural History, the writer is met *in limine* with the following considerable difficulties :—

Firstly, The whole subject of modern Falconry has been exhaustively treated by the accomplished

¹ In 1871 the Barnet Committee for developing the resources of the Alexandra Park as a public recreation ground of 450 acres, offered prizes for the best essays "to illustrate the history and nature of the ancient and noble science of Falconry as distinguished from sports characterised by cruelty." The judges appointed were the late Lord Lilford, Lieutenant-Colonel Delmè Ratchiffe, and the late Mr. Edward Clough Newcome, who, at the age of sixty-two, died in September of the same year. Each competitor distinguished his essay by a motto

2. REMINISCENCES OF A FALCONER

authors of "Falconry in the British Isles," "Modern Falconry," Schlegel's "Traité de Fauconnerie," and especially "Practical Falconry," and "How I became a Falconer," by "Peregrine."¹

He therefore hesitates to embody his own ideas on the best methods of procuring, training, feeding, keeping, and using the various falcons and hawks found most adapted to the modern falconer's service, since ample directions on these subjects are contained in the above-mentioned works, and the methods now pursued by all practical falconers are substantially much the same—lest he should only be presenting the views and instructions of authors (personal friends of his own) in another and inferior dress. Out of what materials, then, is he to construct the required "Essay on Falconry"?

Secondly, His considerable and practical experiences as a falconer in the field, and not in the study (he has kept and used trained hawks of nearly all species for fourteen years past, *i.e.*, since 1857), does not tend to make him very sanguine of any successful practice of Falconry at or in the neighbourhood of the Alexandra Park.

The writer has, however, derived so much real

instead of appending his name or initials, and the judges awarded the first prize to the writer, who had adopted the quotation above given, the author of these "Reminiscences;" the second prize being taken by the Rev. G. E. Freeman, well known as a writer on Falconry under the pseudonym "Peregrine."

Since this essay appeared, several other works on the subject have been published, notably Mr. Lascelles's treatise on Falconry in the *Badminton Library*, Mr. J. E. Harting's "Hints on the Management of Hawks," and Mr. E. B. Michell's "Art and Practice of Hawking."

sport, health, and pleasure from what he has himself done, and seen done, with trained hawks in England, Scotland, and Wales for many years past ; he has been introduced to so many agreeable places and persons by his pursuit of this old sport, in the same way, using the same sort of hawks, and flying at the same sorts of quarry, as our ancestors did, that he is most desirous of assisting in the revival of Falconry in every possible way, however doubtful he may feel of success. With this end, he proposes to give : (1) A short sketch of the actual state and prospects of Falconry matters at the present day, in order that any person into whose hands this short essay may fall may be made aware of what sport he may reasonably hope to realise should he decide on "taking up hawking." (2) To give some account of what his friends and he have actually done of late with trained hawks in the way of capturing real wild quarry in the field with them—as facts are proverbially stubborn things—and "Do your hawks ever kill anything?" is for ever being asked of falconers. (3) To consider the manner in which the resources of the Alexandra Park establishment may best be utilised for the furtherance and spreading of a love for Falconry amongst those who may desire, but who cannot conveniently procure, access to the few private hawking establishments still kept on foot in the United Kingdom.

The project of "a revival of Falconry" would seem to indicate a belief that the old sport has become extinct and obsolete in this country ; and such undoubtedly is the conviction of ninety-nine out of

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every hundred who have now considered the subject. Such, however, is not the case. A cursory perusal of the various communications on the subject published in *The Field*, in the shape of consecutive detailed instructions for, and most interesting articles on, its practice, by the accomplished pen of "Peregrine," and the many queries on the same subject, show plainly enough that the practice of Falconry must yet be somewhere extant. And so it is; and so, in spite of the various difficulties that beset it, we think it ever will be, so long as Englishmen love sport for its own sake, and not for the sake of "the pot." And when did they ever show more and purer love for real artistic sport in the field than they do at the present day?

No, it is not extinct! No, it is living still, and might easily be better known if gentlemen who live in or on the borders of the many unenclosed and comparatively open districts of the kingdom could but be induced to "take it up." Of this good hope might, moreover, be entertained if the matter could be placed before their notice in a reasonable, simple, and feasible shape; and as "seeing" in this case certainly is "believing," and hawks in training, all out "weathering" on their blocks, are more easily believed in than illustrations in works on Falconry, the writer feels convinced that one of the suggestions of the Barnet Committee, if carried out at the Alexandra Park, is likely to be of infinite service in this direction. He refers, of course, to the suggestion of the appropriation of a part of the Alexandra Park for the purposes of a mews or estab-

lishment ("equipage") of trained hawks and their belongings under the care of competent falconers.

Such an establishment, open to the public, but under proper restrictions, and not as a show (or the hawks will be quickly spoiled), and thus placing "Falconry in the British Isles" plainly *en evidence* before the British public, *might*, nay, *must*, be the means of making many a falconer, who, but for it, would never have thought of "taking up hawking;" *might*, nay, *must*, let us trust, induce many a sportsman to spare, and to order his gamekeepers to spare, the falconer's sheet-anchor—the noble peregrine falcon when wild; and yet more surely to spare the poor trained falcon strayed for an hour from her anxious owner. Could this but be done, could a fellow-feeling for another's sport be but thus induced, one of the greatest—yes, the very greatest—of the many drawbacks and difficulties in the falconer's difficult path would be greatly lessened. All hawks in training, and flown at wild quarry, are of necessity exposed to the risk of being lost for a while, and the better the hawk, the greater, of course, is this risk. A wretched hawk, ill-trained, ill-fed, ill-managed, too deficient in speed, wind, and knowledge of her business to attempt preying for herself, is likely to be kept safely enough (should any desire to keep her); while a better bird, better managed, and the noble and useful, most tame and courageous—result of months and months of unremitting care and toil—if she but kill a grouse, partridge, rook, or wood-pigeon out of the falconer's ken, is in the very greatest danger

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of being shot now-a-days by all (and their name in England, alas! has long been "legion") who carry guns, with—or more often without—either "rhyme or reason." Truly it is a hard case. There they sit, row after row, now stuffed and motionless, in their glass cases, and poor caricatures of their former gallant selves, the many fine hawks the writer has trained, carried, fed, and loved, and that have all come to an untimely end from this sad cause alone; not the least aggravation being the fact that months and years of kindness, care, and domesticity had caused them, one and all, to look upon man as their greatest friend, and so exposed them (*carrying loud bells and straps on their luckless legs*) to certain death at his hands, often from the senseless rage for the so-called "preservation" of every remarkable-looking bird.

First, then, the matter in practice, and not as read of in a book, is rather difficult at first, but not in any way impossible, or even discouraging, to the possessor of the necessary qualifications of patience, perseverance, and a natural love and inclination for hawks and hawking, and, the writer fears he must add, of sufficient space of tolerably open ground with wild quarry on it. This need not, however, be his own; and for many of the purposes and flights of Falconry, and notably for rook, lark, and pigeon hawking, leave over such ground is generally to be obtained.

We will now proceed to mention very briefly the "flights" or "chasses" which we should recommend beginners to keep in view, and from which

they should make a selection according to their circumstances and localities, premising that they may rest assured that they are all perfectly practicable at the present day, and that the writer and his friends have successfully conducted all of them within the last ten years, and (with the probable exception of woodcock¹) all of them during the past year of 1870, viz., grouse, blackgame, partridge, woodcock, wild duck, rook, magpie, rabbit, and lark. The writer has seen crows, jays, snipe, Norfolk plover (stone curlew or thick-knee), many wood-pigeons, four jackdaws, and two adult kestrels taken fairly by his trained peregrines. He would that he could recommend wood-pigeons as quarry, but he cannot. In consequence of the gun, they are the bane of English hawking, and every means should be taken to wean trained hawks from their pursuit. More hawks are lost after wood-pigeons than in any other manner, and, as before mentioned, to be lost is to be shot, too often.

The writer has excluded the "heron" from his list of quarry (though she is still, as formerly, far and away the noblest quarry a trained hawk can be loosed at, at least in Europe), partly on account of the considerable expense attending heron-hawking, and partly because he knows of but one place (and that not now available) in which the flight could be properly effected. He alludes to Loo in

¹ Since the above was written, the author has heard of a woodcock having been taken by Mr. Ewen's game-hawks in 1870, and he himself had a remarkable flight at another in Argyllshire, a description of which will be given later on.

Holland, a residence of the King, and the hawking ground of the well-known Loo Hawking Club, which was composed of English and Dutch members, under the presidency of Prince Alexander of the Netherlands—now, alas! broken up, and unlikely to be revived. Suffice it to say, that during its existence, and up to the last, very many herons were fairly taken by the Club hawks; and that a Norfolk squire (the best of the gentlemen-falconers now living) took fifty-four herons in 1843, and fifty-seven in 1844, with a single cast (pair) of passage peregrine falcons he called "Sultan" and "De Ruyter," partly at Loo, and the rest near his own residence. Herons being yet plentiful in certain localities, may, of course, still occasionally be taken by trained hawks, though the "chasse" is not easy, passage falcons of the highest quality (now seldom imported from Valkenswaard in Holland, and specially ordered and caught there for the falconer's use) being most suitable for this flight, in which eyess falcons seldom succeed.

Many an odd heron has been taken of late in Ireland, either by eyess Iceland falcons or passage peregrine falcons; but we think, without exception, they were flown at as they rose from their sitting, or rather standing, position (in the old hawking parlance, they were herons "at siege," or seated); whereas, at Loo, they were flown at on their passage to and fro, the falcons there employed being occasionally slipped at a heron passing even a quarter of a mile high in air and a quarter of a mile wide of the mounted group of falconers.

Mounted they must be, and well (though the Loo ground is some of the best for galloping on in the world), to see the end of such a flight at a "light heron," viz., one unencumbered with a load of fish. Herons, when hard pressed by a good hawk, instantly take refuge in the nearest water, and once there, they are safe enough from efforts of hawk, man, and dog, with dagger beak for weapon, and broad wing for their support. This fact alone is nearly fatal to their pursuit in England. Heron-hawking is well described and illustrated in Schlegel's "Traité de Fauconnerie."

With regard, then, to the flight at grouse, black-game, duck, partridge, or woodcock, these may be classed under the general head of game-hawking.

Good eyess peregrines, of all our hawks, are the hawks to be preferred for these flights; falcon or tiercel, indifferently. In falconers' language, the word "falcon" is ever held to mean the female of the species employed, and "tiercel" (poor Juliet's "tassel-gentle" in "Romeo and Juliet") the male—probably because he is generally one-third less in size than his powerful mate.

Game-hawking is, to our mind, the most attractive, though perhaps the most difficult branch of modern Falconry. Of course, in order to pursue his sport at all, our modern falconer must, for the purpose of game-hawking, be in possession (at all events for the time being) of ground suitable for the purpose, with wild game or quarry thereon—*cela va sans dire*—and we fear we must add, in these days of zealously-guarded rights of real property and of

game (which the ignorant affirm will for ever forsake their beat at the sight of a trained hawk, though taking little or no notice of the wild hawks seen every day of their lives), that this necessity, and, alas! this prejudice also, will be found a greater stumblingblock to our wished-for "revival" than might at first appear. Be this as it may, however, we will go the length for a moment of supposing ourselves to be on a moor. Now, to be on the heather, with or without dog, gun, or rifle—to be, in short, amongst the glens, corries, and burns of the breezy hills—is, to most men, a delicious thing in fine weather; how much more so, then, to a keen falconer with six good, high-mounting, and obedient eyess peregrines sitting hooded on his cadge beside him, with a competent assistant and a brace of good dogs well hunted or worked for him by another servant or "gillie."

We will suppose the hawks to be three of each sex (we have a slight leaning in favour of "falcons" rather than "tiercels" ourselves for grouse, though they do not generally mount nearly so well as tiercels, and mounting is the secret to kill a grouse handsomely after all), and the cadgeman to know no fatigue under the shoulder straps. All this is seldom realised at once, though we have seen it—for six good hawks are rarely indeed to be seen together; the falconer is lucky who has two good and four moderate eyesses out of six, be sure; and with passage hawks it is the same.

Markers, as many as can be found (and they are rare on the hill), should, if possible, be posted

on "coign of 'vantage," the good dogs hunted, and a steady point obtained. When grouse are wild, the best and most obedient hawk may be put on the wing *before* hunting the dogs, and will then lie pretty fairly. The falconer takes, we should imagine, his very best hawk from the cadge on his left gloved fist, removes the leash from the lower half of the figure-of-eight swivel by which it is attached to the jesses, which are never taken off the legs, gives them a twist to close the holes (which should never be omitted, to prevent them from catching in twigs and branches, or rock), unstrikes the hood, and puts it in a pocket or bag, quite safe from loss (a spare hood should always be provided), and casts her loose. She mounts, or should mount, slowly at first, in ever-widening circles around the falconer, or perhaps slightly down-wind of him; in a breeze the hawk should therefore be loosed considerably up-wind of the dog's point. Rapidly borne higher and higher by her broad sails on the breeze, and ever turning her head and piercing eyes from side to side, rest assured, whatever height she may attain, little within her ken is likely to escape her notice. A good game hawk knows well what she is likely to have the chance of doing, and as much expects grouse to rise before the dog's point as "Don" or "Duke" himself does. When she does not seem likely to rise any higher (and an elevation of a quarter of a mile is sometimes gained and kept by a very high flyer, who then appears the size of a swallow), and she has her head well turned in towards you and is reason-

ably over the dog, the falconer, or his assistants, should rush in and spring the grouse, using every possible means to send them down the wind, and not against it, for the purpose of enabling the hawk to make the glorious downward rush we call her "stoop" (truly, as Mr. Freeman says, "known and loved by falconers in all ages") to the greatest advantage. Grouse and partridges with short wings and heavy round bodies make capital weather of it, cutting through a stiff breeze like cannon-balls, whilst a falcon is slightly embarrassed therein, by reason of her longer body, wings and tail—called in the old lore her "train."

Let us further hope that our revivalist, after feeling his heart rise to his mouth during the rapid stoop of his phantom hawk, may have the pleasure of seeing a full-grown red grouse, that splendid moorland game, fall from her foot, cut over and over and sent spinning and motionless to earth, and his hawk rise rapidly from her "down-come" to turn as rapidly over, and plunge down on the dead or dying bird, on which we need not say she ought to sit, rather pleased than not to see her master, and be rewarded as he may see fit.

Partridges are the modern game-hawker's principal quarry, and, of course, are to be flown at in the same manner as grouse. They have, however, an awkward habit of taking refuge in hedges, banks, or the slightest possible cover, and very cleverly too, so that it is most desirable to meet with them on open ground. Ground whereon stone walls take the place of hedges, in these days of enclosures,

is, therefore, not to be despised ; but the glorious arable downs of Berks, Hants, and Wilts are the places for English partridge-hawking. A retriever dog should always accompany the partridge hawks. Hawks of slightly inferior quality to those used for grouse may here be usefully employed. Grouse, when wild, tax the powers of even the best-trained hawks severely, and he must be a real good falconer who can kill them well and often by foot of hawk after September, and yet not lose his hawks pretty often, though the writer well recollects seeing the death of two as good old cock-grouse as ever crowed on the heather on the 9th of December, in company with, and on the grounds of, the accomplished author of "Practical Falconry," and both grouse were bowled over without much ado by that gentleman's well-known good grouse hawk, the lost falcon "Islay." Tiercels are far better than falcons for partridge-hawking.

Woodcock and wild duck have been both flown at and killed by the writer and his friends, and should both (if possible) be attacked in the same way as game, and not be flown at "out of the hood" or as they rise, on account of their great speed, which, in the case of a good woodcock, must really be seen to be believed. Blackgame early in the season afford an easy game flight ; later on, alas ! few falcons can, and fewer still will try, to kill this large and splendid bird of game ; faster far than even his swift, wild congener, the red grouse.

That familiar and most crafty fowl, the rook, has of late years been much pressed into our

modern list of available quarry, and this to his most profound disgust! Present nearly everywhere, of no reputation or value (save in rook-pie), possessed in time of need of considerable powers of flight, and especially good at "shifting" from the best stoops with beautiful ease, this bird forms not the contemptible quarry the uninstructed may suppose. A very short trial will show the difficulties that attend, and the pleasure that may be attached, to this fine flight.

The subtle brain of this bird, when persistently attacked by the only enemy he is at all afraid of, viz., a keen rook-hawk, shows itself in a variety of ways. No stratagem can delude him; the falconer, his horse, and his man, to say nothing of the hawk he bears, are detected and avoided in a very short time. The writer has dressed as a carter in an old smockfrock, followed the plough or the cart, and carried his hawk under shelter of an umbrella, with no other than the inevitable result of alarming and dispersing in a flock all the rooks of the invaded district, in their turn to alarm and more widely to disperse—and return not for the day—every single other rook within a radius of several miles. Rook-hawking, in fact, cannot be conducted for more than two or three consecutive days over the same district of country. It may, however, in the open plains be made a most attractive sport, as all the party should be on horseback, and a numerous and mounted field may freely ride to, and participate fully in, this coursing in the air without there being a drawback to the sport. "Passage" falcons are the

best for this shifting quarry. March or February, if dry, the best time. "Eyesses" are sometimes excellent rook-hawks, but a very considerable difficulty is often to be met with in adapting hawks used to other flights to rooks, since their flesh is not much relished by, and the bird itself is not naturally the quarry of, the peregrine in her wild state, unless very much pressed by hunger.

A good hawking-horse, indifferent to flap of wing or jingle of bell around his ears, is, of course, indispensable to the falconer here. As the flight in a good breeze is often very long (though ever in the assured direction of the very nearest covert), it behoves the falconer to ride hard up to and after this flight, so as to be able to succour, take up, or take down his hawk. Some of the best hawking of modern times has, it is believed, been witnessed for several years past on the open Wiltshire downs by the writer and his friends, the members of "The Old Hawking Club," during their annual rook-hawking there in February and March. Upwards of a hundred rooks have there been taken in one season, and those not wanted liberated, the hawks employed being principally "passage falcons."¹

Magpies have long afforded a fine flight for tiercels. A long, toilsome, and difficult hunt is generally afforded by poor "Mag," and clever must be the falconer, and well-trained and persevering indeed the hawks, that can do much with this crafty

¹ Since these lines were written, 258 rooks were taken with the club hawks in one season (1890), and in an average year the number killed has been from 150 to 160.

bird, which has ever been too much for the writer. Ireland is the paradise of magpie-hawking. In England these birds are seldom found in sufficiently open ground to allow of their successful pursuit. Like wood-pigeons, jays, crows (black and grey), jackdaws, or kestrels, they are here taken but very rarely, save by some chance stoop at odd times. It need scarcely be remarked that rooks, &c., are flown at "out of the hood," the hawk being unhooded and cast off at once on sight. Coursing men are generally fond of seeing good rook-hawking.

Larks may be, and often are, taken by trained merlins (the pretty little hawk formerly devoted to the service of the lady-falconers). A most interesting and well-matched pair, they go higher and higher into the clouds, often till lost to view. Sometimes the larks are captured, oftener far do they escape, and, after the end of September, when clean moulted, they can bid defiance to the efforts of the very best trained merlins. One hundred larks were taken in one season by the lark-hawks (eyess merlins) of the Norfolk falconer before alluded to. Hobbies have not been used for larks of late years.

Rabbits, though ground game, are constantly flown at and taken by the goshawk. This hawk, in most respects a sparrow-hawk the size of a hen, was much valued by our ancestors, and by them used for "hawking in the field" at partridges and pheasants, as opposed to "hawking at the brook or river" at wildfowl, for which the falcons of great speed, that can be taught to "wait on" well, were

ROBERT BARR

FALCONER TO MAJOR FISHER, AND TO THE MARQUIS OF BUTE.

DIED AT CARDIFF CASTLE, SEPTEMBER 1869



REV. OF
CATHOLICISM

THE GREAT AMERICAN

alone adapted. The keepers of gos- and sparrow-hawks were then called "hawkers"; the keepers of all the long-winged falcons, "falconers."

In later days the goshawk used in England has been mostly imported from Sweden and France, and trained for rabbits exclusively. She is often of the vile temper of her small relative, the sparrow-hawk, though, when once in good-humour and fit, she can do a vast deal of work in the day, owing to her most bloodthirsty disposition, which no amount of killing can ever satisfy. If she gets loose amongst other hawks, she will invariably kill all she can master, one after another, until none are left. The writer not liking her or her kin, and not deeming the capturing of quadrupeds by birds good sport, has little practical knowledge of rabbit-hawking with the goshawk. Ample directions for training this hawk will be found in Mr. Freeman's "Practical Falconry."

The writer has thus shortly noticed some of the "flights" most likely to be attempted in our hoped-for "revival" of hawking, because he is of opinion that by some such considerations alone can the object proposed by the Barnet Committee's circular be effected, and that (at all events in a short essay) by a description alone, however imperfect, of the sport offered by modern Falconry can "its pursuit be revived and rendered attractive and instructive" without a visible participation in its pleasures in the field.

Secondly, then, to give briefly some idea of what may be done with trained hawks, with care.

B

The game-hawking establishment of that well-known sportsman, Mr. Ewen (the Master of the Ayrshire Harriers), in the year 1871 killed 269 head of game, entirely unaided by the gun or other "engine." They have the advantages of open country, plenty of game, and good dogs ; but surely these are qualifications also possessed by many other "good men and true." The skill and love for the old sport, and the talents of the professional falconer—Peter Ballantine—which yearly lead up to such results, are rarer far to find. May the aid and encouragement offered by the "Alexandra Park" induce many an owner of English broad and open acres once more to follow the old sport of his fathers, a sport which can be best pursued in very open districts (where fox-hunting can less attain perfection), can extract the highest class of sport from partridges so wild as to be inaccessible to aught but "driving" (not easy on downland), or the vile and paltry substitute for the noble peregrine falcon—that grotesque and unsportsmanlike imposition, "Dart's hawk-kite, folding, calico, price 9s."! And in March, when vixen foxes spoil so oft the fox-hunter's joy, can find him a capital gallop on the best of turf after the fast rook-hawks, a brilliant "course in the air," if to coursing given, and a sure "find" at no one's expense, with no fences and few crops to be ridden over.

The writer, who lives in one of the worst districts in broad England for the prosecution of the old sport, has during the past season with trained hawks killed crow, rook, magpie, fifty partridges, a starling,

a kestrel, and one wood-pigeon (the two last-named are quarry seldom fairly killed), and hopes to have many a fine rook flight in March next on the lovely open Wiltshire plain where he has for years past enjoyed capital sport (in the pleasantest of company) at this sable quarry. Mr. Freeman confines himself very much to grouse-hawking, at which "high game" he has been unusually successful, and several other good falconers in England and Ireland have yearly excellent sport.

Surely the possibility of such a high-class sport requires but to be known to be appreciated more widely ; and thus we naturally come to consider the advantages proposed to be offered to the "revived" study and practice of Falconry at the Alexandra Park ; and these are many and great ; for although we cannot think that trained hawks can ever be flown to advantage at any loose-flying quarry in the confined space of the Alexandra Park grounds, we are yet of opinion that obedient, well-trained peregrines may be safely "put on the wing to the lure" there, a practice resorted to by most falconers in bad weather and at odd times to keep their hawks in wind and flying order. This is ever a very pleasing sight. The stately flight and great docility of a well-trained, high-flying hawk, its ready obedience, and prompt return to the falconer's lure, from absolute and graceful freedom, is ever viewed by the uninitiated with astonishment and satisfaction, and affords an earnest of what they themselves may also hope for "in the field" and at wild quarry. Two of the writer's best falcons would

absolutely drop from the very clouds to his outstretched and gloved fist for a bit of meat.

Moreover, Falconry, though easy enough to practise when once well learnt, is one of those arts which, like turning, *e.g.*, cannot easily be learnt from the directions of any book, and hence the writer views with great satisfaction the proposed establishment of a first-class mews of trained hawks at the Alexandra Park. This might be rendered yet more interesting if it contained also a collection of the various foreign falcons, eagles, and hawks used for Falconry abroad. Such an establishment, with a competent resident falconer at its head (should any such be at liberty and procurable), would undoubtedly do more for the popularising and spread of Falconry amongst us than any amount of writing about it. The sight of the hoods, leashes, jesses, bells, blocks, pole-screens, &c., &c., and the hooding of the hawks, that "stumblingblock" of the beginner, accompanied by suitable explanations, under suitable restrictions, would also give a marvellous insight into the various hidden difficulties that beset a beginner in any pursuit. The practice of the old sport has fallen so very low, both in England and Holland, that a suitable falconer would be hard to find. As the writer believes he knows all, or nearly all, such as are now living, he will with pleasure do his best for the old sport in this way, if desired, in finding such a man. He should be English or Scotch if possible, for the Dutch falconers, as a rule, speak no English.

The sending of hawks in training or to be

moulted at the Alexandra Park mews would certainly, at times, be an accommodation to the man who is "his own falconer"; the moulting especially, if the establishment were well and liberally conducted, would be certain to be availed of.

Matches, another suggestion of the Committee, are never likely to be made, the writer thinks, and could very seldom ever have been made—(1) from the difficulty of arriving at any just decision; (2) from the impossibility of flying hawks together unacquainted with each other; and (3) from their ferocity very often when they are. But he would fain hope that arrangements for a day's hawking in suitable weather might be made at any central hawking *rendezvous*, either by owners of hawks possessing ground of their own, or between those possessed of hawks and those possessed of ground, and desirous of obtaining a sight of the old sport in the field, or otherwise; and as he cannot but think hopefully and gratefully of the present proposal for the "revival" of the old sport he loves so well by the Barnet Committee, he begs to offer them his best thanks, and to wish their undertaking in all things heartily "God speed."

MODERN FALCONRY¹

AS modern Falconry is necessarily conducted very much in the same way, and with the same sort of hawks, as it was conducted by our ancestors, it is impossible to avoid some reference at least to ancient times; though it will be convenient on the present occasion to confine oneself as much as possible to what is not only possible, but of constant and almost daily practice by many amongst us at the present day; and this the more from the fact that, from the necessity of the case, and the greatly changed conditions under which Falconry, to be practised at all, must now be practised in this and most other countries, it has long been very little *en evidence* in public, and is pretty generally believed to have all but ceased to exist. This is not so. It has never yet ceased to be practised in Scotland from the earliest times. And the Scotch school of falconers, represented by several distinguished Scotch families and their professional falconers, using and flying their native falcons at their native game, has long existed, and still exists. In England, from the more general practice of shooting, and the spread and increase of population and enclosure of open land, it appears

¹ A paper read before the Cotteswold Naturalist's Field Club at Gloucester, November 26, 1899.

to have fallen into disuse about the time of the Commonwealth, whilst it lingered on the Continent, and often on a large scale, till the period of Napoleon's wars. About the close of the eighteenth century, Lord Orford (uncle to Horace Walpole) and Colonel Thornton made a very considerable and successful effort to revive hawking in this country, to which end they introduced "the Dutch School of Falconry" into England, with, of course, Dutch professional falconers from Valkenswaard, Eindhoven, Holland—the nursery place of Dutch hawking, and where its practice as a profession has never yet been extinct. This Dutch system of hawking had extended into Scotland, which has always had its own native falconers, the Scotch using eyesses, or nestling falcons, and the Dutch necessarily passage hawks or wild-caught birds, since no falcon breeds in the lowlands of Holland, though nearly all varieties pass over it yearly when migrating. As a very sufficient knowledge of the importance and constant reference to Falconry and its practice, its own peculiar vocabulary, rights, dignities, &c., &c., amongst our ancestors, doubtless obtains amongst us, a very short reference to ancient Falconry must here suffice. I cannot, however, well help recollecting in this city of Gloucester that King John, a great sportsman, once sent his falconer, who bore the name of Hawkinus de Hautville (of which more anon), to Gloucester for the purpose, not then of using, but of moulting or mewing his falcons when the time for the shedding their feathers had arrived. Moulting is a long, tedious, and trouble-

some process in the case of many trained hawks, and especially in the case of that friend and companion of nobles of all ages, the peregrine falcon, the most docile and useful by far of all hawks ever known to man. In short, the only real fault that *can* be alleged against this hawk is the fact that she is a slow and bad moult, apparently even in a wild state. Mews, though now the designation of stables in London, were anciently the places of abode of falcons undergoing their annual process of moult, extending over five months, and the professional falconers, valets, and servants of their owners employed in caring for them. King John sent his servant to Gloucester, armed with a rescript to the Sheriff of Gloucester to provide proper food, lodging, and maintenance for him, his men, and his hawks; and, oddly enough, some of them are mentioned by name, viz., the King's Gire (ger) falcon, "Le Réfus" (so called, doubtless, from her propensity to refuse to fly at the desired game, a propensity common to gerfalcons at the present day), "Black-man," and "The Foolish Falcon." Oddly enough, too, the old family of Hawkins of the Haw, near Tewkesbury, have long been famous sportsmen, though I have never heard of their being falconers of late years.

From the days of King John to the present time is a long interval indeed; but a remarkable succession of falconers from father to son, for many generations, occurs in the ancient Scottish family of the Flemings, of Barochan Tower, in Renfrewshire. The present possessor kept hawks in India,

as do the officers of the Guide Corps on the frontier, 3rd Sikhs, &c., and some of our own officers, and many of the native princes and nobles. His father kept the Renfrewshire Subscription Hawks until his death in 1819, and his grandfather was a celebrated falconer. Peter Fleming, an ancestor, received a hawk's hood set with jewels from James IV. of Scotland on the occasion of his tiercel beating the king's falcon. This interesting relic is carefully preserved in the family. The falconers employed by the Flemings have always been Scotchmen. No list of amateur falconers can be produced for England from the time of the last civil war to the close of the last century, from which period to the present day a very perfect list is well known. Notwithstanding this, the Dukes of St. Albans have for ages been hereditary Grand Falconers of England. The last Under-Falconer of Scotland was Mr. Marshall Gardener, who retired from his office in 1840. It is now in abeyance.

As it is obviously impossible to do anything like justice to this subject within the ordinary limits of "a paper," I shall endeavour to avoid entering into details, and think it may be sufficient for our present purpose to consider shortly :—

(1.) The various hawks usually employed in all modern as in ancient (European) Falconry : those used more especially in Eastern and North African sport being merely glanced at.

(2.) The way they are caught and procured.

(3.) The methods of taming, training, and using

them, and the flights, *chasses*, or quarries for which each species is most adapted and most used.

(4.) The kind of country required for the satisfactory practice of these different flights.

(5.) Some general remarks on the modern practice of the old sport ; the very great and increasing difficulties attending it ; and, if possible, some of the writer's own experiences, and a short description of some of the flights he has seen and enjoyed ; and he regrets his entire inability to do this in a better manner, or to his reader's satisfaction, by means of the pen alone, the subject requiring illustration by production of the hawk and her trappings.

First, then, as to the hawks employed. These, as formerly, are of course divided, in falconers' fashion, into "hawks, long- and short-winged ;" and a very suitable division it is. In fact, Falconry proper means the employment of some species of long-winged falcon ; hawking that of some species of short-winged hawk. For all practical purposes, the long-winged hawks employed consist of three species or varieties of the great Northern falcons, called ger or gyr falcons (viz., the Greenland, Iceland, and Norwegian gerfalcons), the hobby, and the tiny merlin, and, last and best, the well-known peregrine falcon. This sheet-anchor of the falconer in all ages and in every clime (for she truly deserves her name—Peregrine, Fr. *Pélerin*, Ger. *Pilgrimsfalk*) is found at various periods of the year in most countries, where her peculiar and splendid stoop has in every age been a terror, not

only to the swift, but also to the strong. Yes, beloved bird, well may I praise thee! Adorned with every good gift—beauty, grace, strength, and unmatchable speed, courage, skill, and perseverance—to all these thou dost add the tameness and docility that so admirably adapts thee to be the companion, friend, and servant of man. Once held in the highest esteem by prince and noble, and never far off from the owner, even when the day's sport was done, thou hast not changed. My friends and I have ever found thee exactly what our ancestors found thee, and as all who seek shall find thee, as long as thou art to be found. But what a change has occurred in thy old relations to man in England! No longer legislated for and defended by custom from harm, thou hast become a sort of common enemy, and the most ignorant of game-keepers deems and treats thee as "vermin," with the sanction and by the desire of him who should know and treat thee better, if for no other reason than for the sake of thy faithful services to his predecessors over the very lands whereon I have had the pain of seeing thy poor skeleton depending from a vile rusty nail on the keeper's gibbet—thou who once sat caressed on the wrist of Beauty!

The coast and inland precipices of the British islands are some of the most favourite breeding-places of this fine falcon, though the incessant persecution now bestowed on her everywhere, and the taking of her eggs and young so constantly as to render the procuring of young peregrine

falcons to be trained for sport increasingly difficult year by year, is rapidly reducing her numbers. Still, the open downland country of the South and the moorlands of the North of England are frequently graced by the peregrine's flight; and long may they so continue to be; for without her Falconry could hardly exist, though hawking would remain.

The goshawk and sparrow-hawk are both short-winged hawks, and are easily to be distinguished from the aristocracy of their race—the falcons proper—by the yellow colour of the iris of *their* eyes, those of all falcons whatsoever being very dark brown, approaching to black (so black as to be little lighter in colour than the black pupil of the eye itself). Foreign falcons, such as sakers and lanners, and the lovely Indian variety of the peregrine falcon called Shaheen, are all used in Persian, Moorish, Arabic, and Indian Falconry. A variety of the golden eagle called Berkute is in use amongst the Kirghis of the steppes of Asia; and the goshawk and sparrow-hawk in enclosed countries anywhere, where speed is not so much required in the pursuer as courage and determination.

(2.) The way falcons and hawks are usually caught or procured alive and unharmed for the purpose of being trained.

They are usually divided into haggard-passage or wild-caught hawks, and eyesses, or nestlings taken by hand from the eyrie or nest before they can fly. It is needless to say that the former are for all ends desired by the falconer, but one, viz.,

tameness, immeasurably to be preferred. The one, in fact, may be roughly compared to a wild lioness or tigress, born and bred up and well taught her business by her parents, as in very truth she is. She is therefore, of course, when caught by man and tamed sufficiently to be trained and used for sport, most competent to take, in the best of style, any fowl she may happen to meet within her compass. The eyess, or nestling falcon or hawk, taken too young to have even once flown on the wing, and deprived for ever of the invaluable teaching of her parents, is entirely ignorant at first of any single thing she should know or do, except to eat meat at the hands of her keeper. She cannot even fly without at least a month's flying loose, called "flying at hack," directly she is fully summed or feathered.¹ Considerable powers of speed, and the desire—and in time the ability—to prey for herself do eventually come to the nestling's aid. I have, however, never seen or heard of any nestling falcon, however good and however prized and successful, whose style of flying and stooping came up to those of a wild hawk, caught whilst her powers of footing (hawks all

¹ This is usually effected by the young falcon being provided with jesses and a large and heavy bell, large enough to hinder her greatly in attempting to take wild quarry. She is then set at liberty in any convenient place where she may be tolerably safe from harm for twenty miles round, fed twice daily, and caught up as best she may be when she ceases to "come in pretty regularly to evening feed." I have even hacked hawks from Stroud in the past—absurd as it seems in the present time!—and taken them up after a month's good hack. I know of few places in England where this can now be done. At the time of writing these lines I had three nestling peregrines from Dorset flying loose "at hack" from an old ruin in the neighbourhood of Thurles, Ireland.

strike and catch with their feet alone, or by blows from their powerful and sharp hind-talons, in the case of falcons proper) are for ever far inferior to those of her better trained and better practised and once wild congener; so that she, in turn, may be compared to a lioness, &c., born in a ménagerie. Wild falcons, goshawks, and sparrow-hawks are sometimes trapped unharmed, if great care be taken, on prey they have killed, and so come into our hands. If their valuable flight feathers and tail feathers be not much damaged, their captor deserves great praise. I have had three or four wild English peregrines thus procured. I have also most grateful memories of the services of one such—once an adult female peregrine falcon—wild on the Wiltshire Downs, and who killed for me, in the grandest possible style, grouse after grouse daily in September and October in Northumberland, in a style, from a lofty pitch and with the peculiar stoop of the wild peregrine, that no one who saw is likely to forget. Poor, dear old "Queen!" She did not escape scatheless from the cruel trap, and her foot suffered thereby, and gout (unknown to her till her acquaintance with man) rendered her useless after one season's brilliant performances. I used to know her stoop from all other a very long way off. As no dependence can be placed on such a source of supply, and as no one who can procure wild-caught peregrines is likely to be contented long with nestlings, we modern users of peregrines have recourse yearly to a supply of this raw material for our sport,

found, oddly enough, in the village of Valkenswaard, Eindhoven, Holland. No falcon, or no peregrine falcon, breeds in that flat land, but a yearly migration of birds of prey of most European species takes place there in November. This migration is at that period of the year entirely from west to east, and the usual track of the migration appears to pass pretty centrally over the barren heaths on the confines of Holland and Belgium. As the migration of birds is still very little understood by naturalists, or even where they go or whence they come, in countless instances, conjecture is in vain. India is generally regarded as the hawk's goal, but it is but conjecture. What is certain is, that for a month or so, usually in November, a multitude of birds of prey are then and there to be seen at a vast height in the air, and the circumstance has been taken advantage of for ages past by the Dutch falconers. Dutch Falconry had never been extinguished until the final disappearance of the Loo Hawking Club, formerly presided over by the sovereign and the princes of the Netherlands. Valkenswaard has from immemorial times been the home of hawk-catchers, and is so still. Modern falconers yearly order of Adrian Mollen, formerly one of the royal falconers, such peregrines as they desire, either adult—then called haggard—or young, *i.e.*, birds of the year, from their colour called red or passage-hawks (adult peregrines are of a bluish colour, and totally different in hue from those in the brown dress of the first year's plumage). According to the number

ordered, Mollen "puts out," or puts in order, so many "huts" on the heath, and mans them with competent hawk-catchers for the brief migration or "passage" in question.

The method adopted is intricate and interesting, and can be only briefly described here. The so-called "huts" are pits dug out, walled with sods, and roofed with sods and heather, so as to be very undistinguishable from the surroundings. The occupant, who is frequently by profession a cobbler, is provided with provisions, water, and schnapps, and a sack of boots and shoes to mend. As his vision is but circumscribed, he depends greatly upon a little living sentinel who lives in full sight of his hut in a little turf cabin or cage outside. This sentinel is the larger butcher-bird or shrike, *Lanius excubitor*—I have hitherto avoided Latin names—which bird is gifted with the most remarkable power of sight, and, as it would seem, with a tender conscience. Be this as it may, the moment he perceives any bird of prey, however far off, and however high (I am told beyond the power of human vision) he becomes highly agitated, and calls and attracts the attention of the occupant of the hut, exhibiting a terror so extreme and unusual as really to suggest a sense of expectation of retributive justice on himself from the approaching hawk for the countless cruel and dastardly actions of his whole life. Truly is he named the butcher-bird, for, like all shrikes, his method is to rend his victims—small birds—limb from limb, impaling them first carefully on a long thorn, or fixing them

PETER BALLANTINE

(WITH HIS GRANDSON, WILLIE BALLANTINE)

**FALCONER TO MR. FLEMING OF BARROCHAN, 1820-32 ; TO LORD
CARMARTHEN (AFTERWARDS DUKE OF LEEDS), 1832-35 ; TO
SIR JAMES BOSWELL OF AUCHINLECK, 1835-50 ; TO MR.
ROBERT EWEN OF EWENFIELD, 1850-77 ; AND TO
MR. OSWALD OF AUCHINCRAIVE, 1878-84.
DIED OCT. 1884, AGED 86**



TO THE
ABORIGINAL

in a fork near his larder, which he thus literally festoons with their remains. No one who has not seen the neat way in which the English shrike, *Lanius collurio*, thus serves countless insects on a blackthorn bush, can have any idea of the pain inflicted. In addition to this sentinel, the hawk-catcher is supplied with a pigeon, who lives in a little turf hut at the foot of a pole to the top of which is attached a cord reaching to his hand. Another pigeon similarly lodged about one hundred yards from his hut door and close to a carefully concealed bow-net, working easily and well, also from inside the hut, completes his devices. The butcher-bird's actions denote the approach of the migrating hawk—species, age, and sex unknown—and the hawk-catcher pretends to be able to determine the distance and quality of the approaching migrant by the different intensity of the terror of the sentinel. When deemed sufficiently near, the hawk-catcher pulls the string of the pole-pigeon, and causes him to flutter forth from his shelter, but so that he can instantly regain it at need. This lure is frequently sufficient to attract the passing hawk (probably sharp-set) from the clouds, and is often instantly followed by the rush of the lofty and violent stoop—most grateful of all sounds to the patient ear of the concealed cobbler. In a moment the lure pigeon is gone, safe once more in his little hut. The disappointed hawk wheels round, whereupon the cobbler pulls the other poor, devoted pigeon out of *his* shelter, and leaves him exposed. Down comes the hawk very often (seeing nothing

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wrong) and kills and soon begins to eat his prey. It may here be parenthetically stated that nothing will induce a wild falcon to eat a morsel of any live bird. She invariably kills it first, with incredible ease and swiftness, by two or three powerful bites at the back of the neck, killing a pigeon, grouse, or partridge far faster than any human being can with their hands, and usually decapitating it as well. This *finale* is arranged to take place close to the sweep of a bow-net; but the hawk is not disposed to relinquish her prey easily, and usually suffers herself to be drawn slowly along with it into the reach of the bow-net. The line is fixed there, and the delighted cobbler takes a good hold of the cord or wire that throws the bow-net (a most clever contrivance), and with one masterly pull the hawk and pigeon are therein, from whence there is no escape. The taking of a wild falcon out of a net, without the slightest harm, and without even ruffling a feather, is a feat requiring much skill and practice, but it is soon done, and a curious arrangement of canvas and strings reduces the proud and noble captive in a very few minutes from a denizen of the air to a motionless mummy, lying on its back entirely helpless on the heath, with the wings fast pinioned to its sides, an easy hood on its head, and its feet and legs manacled with soft list—a change as strange as rapid, and one that must be seen to be believed.

One, two, or even three such hawks are occasionally thus captured at a single "hut" in the day,

though as often whole days pass without anything to excite the restless vigilance of the butcher-bird sentinel. Buzzards, goshawks, sparrow-hawks, merlins, and even, I think, an occasional eagle, have thus also fallen a prey to the Valkenswaard falconers. In the evening the captures of the day (still in the mummy state) are taken from the hut to Valkenswaard, where a red or a young peregrine is worth about £4.

As neither falconry nor hawking are longer practised in Holland, there is no need for the Valkenswaard hawks to be trained there. They are all ordered previously by English or French falconers, and I think at present by no others, and when ready for removal, servants are sent for these falcons or hawks, or occasionally a falconer or naturalist anxious to see with his own eyes the singular process of capture, and to enjoy the further sight of the long row of lovely peregrines, no longer mummies, but sitting bolt upright on the pole-screen, with hood on head, jesses on leg, and attached by swivel and leash to the pole whereon they stand. However, as a fortnight's care and gentle handling are usually bestowed on the captured hawks by Mollen and his sons and assistants, it may be as well to mention the ordinary steps for taming so wild a creature, and eventually rendering her so docile and obedient as to "wait on" high in air, wholly her own mistress, and as free as when she first was observed by our butcher-bird, and herself observed the cobbler's offered pigeon ; but *this* time for the purpose, per-

chance, of striking to earth, with the self-same sort of stoop, a grouse or a partridge even now lying *perdu* in front of her owner's well-trained and motionless dogs amongst the Northumberland heather. The newly caught hawk, when her furniture as above has been supplied, and the sharp point of her beak, and the yet sharper points of her black talons, have been slightly "coped" or shortened by the falconer's pincers (for the Dutchmen are very careful of their hands and fingers, and these necessities of her wild life are not likely to be immediately wanted again), is probably replaced on the pole. Two are also usually taken in hand by one person, and are sedulously attended to from morning to night, with very little intermission. The hood used at first is called a ruffer hood. It is large and easy, and although preventing all sight, is one the hawk can eat through; and it is not removed night or day for a week, as she can easily sleep in it, though, if they could themselves do without sleep (as truly they cannot), the Dutchmen could tame these falcons in half the time, could they but keep them awake for three nights consecutively as well as three days. For some reason, long protracted deprivation of sleep appears to deprive the wildest hawk (for a season) of her wildness, and seems to change her nature. If followed up by judicious treatment, the change is rendered permanent, but a very little inattention and a very little sleep soon changes the scene. "*Elle se ravisera*," says the old French falconer D'Arcussia, and all will have to be done over again.

The best method of taming a wild-caught hawk (no such easy task ordinarily, I trow) is found to be by *carrying* her about on the gloved fist, and stroking her occasionally with a soft wing or feather. The unusual position and involuntary motion appear to disconcert the wildest, much to our advantage. She has to be broken to the hood also; likewise none too easy. Some hawks dislike this encumbrance; others seem to care less for its infliction. None like it, and all, unless skilfully handled therewith at their first making, are more or less hood-shy, and more or less disabled for future usefulness. A wild-caught hawk is not inclined to eat, and some will not eat for many days (always a bad sign of a wild and shy temper). However, hunger is a sharp sauce, and *Falco peregrinus*, having seldom known it as a wild, soon acknowledges its power as a tame or captive bird. She soon discovers that meat is offered by the feel of it near her feet, and sooner or later will eat it through the hood. It is many days before she will eat it bareheaded (always on the falconer's glove, be it noted); and first of all by candlelight alone, afterwards in a room, and after that in the open air. Having fed, often and well, on and from the hand of man, she is placed on the pole, her hood is removed, and she is tempted by something specially nice to step from the pole to the falconer's fist, to reach and get it. Some are bold, others shy; some eager, others the reverse; but in time all, except the occasional schellums or rogues, whom none can tame, come to hand, and finally jump and then fly

quite long distances (in the room) to the fist for food. This exercise is long continued and maintained by the food being good but tough, and so the banquet of the hungry hawk is long protracted, to her own great improvement in tameness to her keeper, and confidence in his good intentions. The pinion of a pigeon, or part of an oxtail, is excellent "pulling." Then the falcon is introduced to the "lure," the special engine of the falconer of all ages.

How long and how strong was the feeling produced by the love and practice of Falconry on our fathers is proved by the presence to this day of so many of the technical terms of Falconry in our language. "Lure," to attract, speaks for itself; the substantive "lure" being the attraction offered by a falconer to his distant hawk to bring her back to him. Most of us of the craft have had constant occasion to repeat poor Juliet's mournful cry: "Oh, for a falconer's voice to lure this tassel (*i.e.* tiercel) gentle back again." Tiercel, from *tiers*, three, is the falconer's word for the males of all falcons and hawks, as they are invariably about one-third less in size and strength than their mates. During the period of incubation, the males of all falcons are observed to work ceaselessly to supply their mate and ravenous—most ravenous—young with food, whilst the stronger female spends her whole time close by their side for their defence; and woe betide any prowling bird, raven, jackdaw, or herring-gull that ventures to approach the rocky shelf, or sea-cliff, or inland precipice where she abideth. I have myself known stout cliff-climbers,

let down with a rope for the purpose, have to give it up, frightened by the attack on their faces of the infuriated old birds.

A "lure" is or may be any portable object on which a hawk has been fed. The dead body of the bird it is more especially to be used to capture is, of course, a good "lure"; but as this cannot always be procured and kept fresh, an iron horseshoe covered with tow and leather, a loop for a swivel, and wings of any sort (notably again those of the bird for which it is sought to use the hawk when trained) are attached, and strings by which pieces of lean beef, bird, or even rabbit, may be securely fastened. After being often and well fed on this on the ground, the hawk in a creance, or line, is induced to come to it farther and farther; and when she will come to it, and will not leave it, but sticks to it, and suffers herself to be taken up on it rather than leave it (of course being well rewarded thereon for her goodness), she is held up loose from all tether, and called to the "lure" from long distances. If a bird, dead or alive, of the sort aimed at, be then substituted for the "lure," and she acts equally well therewith, little remains but to introduce her to the serious business for which you desire her services, for which nature has so well inclined her, and for which, or some such work, her parents taught and she practised the lesson required before you obtained possession of her, but which now (sweet docile bird) she is equally ready to practise for you. Many a time has my eight-year-old falcon, and friend, "Lady Jane

Grey," loudly uttered her note of chirping delight by my side when she has brought down the desire of her heart—a grouse: the very self-same cry as she whilom uttered thereon in her wild state, when man was her most dreaded foe, to be avoided at sight, more than a quarter of a mile off.

In teaching a falcon to "wait on" for game the "lure" is withdrawn and concealed just before her approach. This disappointment causes her to circle round (exactly what you want) to see where it is. Instantly it is reproduced. When the game is found in the field the same is done, and on the hawk attaining any height it is flushed under her, and she is not long in making her stoop; and let us hope that her first few efforts will be successful, and that if so, her master will reward her most liberally thereon.

The noblest of all possible flights in which the powers of a trained hawk could be employed were confessedly those of the wild kite and the heron. Neither of these, of course, *ex necessitate rei*, could be effected in the waiting-on style, neither kite nor heron allowing of that. In fact, nine times out of ten, in flying at the heron (the only one of these two grand *chasses* possible at the present day, for the simple reason of the disappearance of the kite as a common bird entirely from the British Isles, and generally so throughout Europe), the hawk or hawks employed have to be unhooded and cast off at the heron high in air, and it is to be pulled down (if pulled down this well-armed, strong-winged fowl is to be), simply

and solely by strength of wing and talon of the far smaller falcon, aided by her courageous heart. It were too long a task for me here to essay to recount how princes and nobles of old flew *Milvus regalis* of yore, for they had first to procure hawks of sufficient strength and courage (gerfalcons, by preference); next to find the crafty aerial scavenger, with the forked tail and powers of flight but little inferior to their own, though coupled with a craven spirit; and, thirdly, to bring him down from a speck in the blue to a distance possible to be reached by his intended assailants. All this before the interesting struggle could even be begun—a struggle which neither I nor any living falconer has seen in this degenerate age, nor ever will, I trow, unless some enthusiast, to whom the expenditure of time and money are literally “no object,” will spend not a little of both in emulating the deeds of his fathers, having first discovered kites enough in a country as open as the best part of Salisbury Plain.

The flight at the heron is universally esteemed next, and has been practised in perfection by the English and Dutch falconers of the Loo Club at the Royal Palace of the Loo in Holland, under the presidency of Prince Alexander of the Netherlands, until some fifty years ago, when the club was given up, and since then no heron-hawking has taken place at the Loo. I find in Schlegel's grand “*Traité de Fauconnerie*,” that in the year 1842 the falcons of the Loo Hawking Club numbered 44, and the herons taken were 148; in 1843, 40 and 200;

in 1844, 36 and 100; about the same until 1849, when it was 14 and 128; in 1850, 16 and 137 respectively. I have been unable to ascertain the annual expenses of this fine establishment; but from the number of falconers and men and horses required (the latter having to gallop their best on the sound, holding dunes of heath-land surrounding the vast heronry at Loo for miles) it must have been very considerable. Mr. Clough Newcome, one of the English members, long flew herons at his home at Hockwold, and at Didlington in Norfolk; and in 1843 he had the best possible cast of passage-hawks for a heron flight, called "Sultan" and "De Ruyter." They were, of course, taken at Valkenswaard, and trained and used at the Loo; and during their third year they took at Hockwold and the Loo 54 herons, and in 1844 57 herons.

The herons thus taken were, with few exceptions, released very slightly harmed, but adorned with a ring attached to a leg, with the date of capture added, and (if they possessed them) minus the black pendant feathers at the back of a mature heron's head—usually set with jewels and worn in the falconer's cap. I have never myself seen a heron flight, nor has there been one attempted by the Old Hawking Club which yearly meets on Salisbury Plain. Their quarry is the rook, which in early spring on those open downs, with no mean powers of wing (witness its evolutions in a wind sometimes), and aided by a most sagacious brain, with plenty of law, makes a substitute to-day,

though a very poor one, for the noble heron of the past. The falconers are well mounted and ride very hard. Rook-hawking is thus performed to entire perfection.

The nearest approach to a heron flight that I have ever seen occurred in this wise. In October 1889, my old grouse hawk, "Lady Jane," was waiting on at a great height; so great that, though she was upwards of three feet across from tip to tip of expanded wings, she appeared in the sky like a speck over the moor, the dogs being unable for some time to find her a grouse. Presently they stood, and on the men moving forward to put them up for her, I perceived her in the act of stooping. I called out to prevent their advance, and fixed my glasses on the hawk, expecting to see her in pursuit of other grouse, raised accidentally. Presently she was down, and instantly engaged with some large bird, which I deemed, and the men asserted, to be a carrion crow. As it looked large and light-coloured, "then it is a hoody (Royston) crow;" but in a moment, as the excited couple rose high in air, at it ding-dong, I knew it was no crow. No, none of that ignoble brood ever flew or held the air like this strange quarry, which in a few seconds more I made out to be *Numenius arquata*, the common or long-billed curlew. I know no instance of this grand flyer having been taken by a trained hawk, and it is generally deemed beyond their power. Of course one may be occasionally slain by a wild falcon; but then, doubtless, the worst wild falcon is far before the best trained one, and if

inclined and meaning it, can take most fowls that wing the air with more or less ease. My poor trained bird (I should add, the best I have ever had of her sex) was in very indifferent plumage then, but she stuck to her work for more than twenty minutes, during the whole of which time the curlew (in desperate earnest) was quite unable to get away from her. Stoop succeeded stoop, and, as I thought, too rapidly; and when it is considered that the sole effort of the curlew was to avoid the deadly blow, and mount higher than her adversary after its failure, and that every failure placed the stooping falcon sixty yards and more below the curlew, rapidly mounting on the best of wings, and that she had to regain her position, and get a hundred yards above her hoped-for quarry, before she could again return to the attack, the courage, ability, and perseverance with which she kept at it, until both were out of sight of two of the best pair of eyes I have known, fairly astonished me. My excellent field-glasses still showed me two little black dots in the clear blue sky, the falcon even then repeating her unavailing efforts, by ringing widely against the wind, and so mounting laboriously over the curlew, whose upward progression was accomplished by the most extraordinary bounds (I can call her movements nothing else) I ever saw. Only two of these many stoops "told" all through this long contest. Twice I saw the curlew knocked round and up, and twice her feathers floated in the air; but the harm done was not enough; the two dots finally separated, and

the disappointed falcon was slowly recalled to us. She needed no "lure," and seldom or never had one shown, for she was perfectly willing to stay and work with us. It may be of interest to remark, that on looking round we saw the pointer and setter (which on another occasion stood for half-an-hour by the watch) were still "on the point," and when the hawk came over, still at a vast elevation, the long-suffering dogs were relieved. The grouse (three or four) were sprung, and "Lady Jane," tired as she was, stooped and killed one with her usual ease. Needless, I hope, to say she did not go hungry to bed that night for want of a good meal of grouse! We were all convinced that, with a companion to help her (two falcons are always flown at a heron, as two greyhounds are usually slipped at a hare), the curlew would have been taken in five minutes.

I may here mention a singular flight I once witnessed at a woodcock? This bird, when put to it, possesses remarkable powers of flight, as its extended migrations, and splendid shape and length of wing, abundantly warrants. It occurred in this wise. In October 1866 I found myself with hawks (eyesses), dogs, gillies, a keeper, and my gun on the moor near the western end of Loch Eil, in Argyllshire, at a place called Fassiefern, not far from the place where Prince Charlie met his devoted Highland clansmen in arms for his crown, only to lose the day and their lives at fatal and bloody Culloden. I made a line to beat out a wide bank of bracken, then brown with early

autumn, and saw a bird which I believed then to be a cock, and the keeper, a winged grouse, jump up in front. Had I but had the courage of my convictions, and put my favourite falcon, called "Taillie," from her broken tail—a Welsh hawk she, from the Glamorgan precipices of the Worms' Head—aloft, then she would probably have been saved much trouble, and we should have lost a glorious sight, and flight, for the day was stilly, bright, and lovely, and the sea-loch and its waves sparkled in the sun. No, I took her on my fist, and struck her hood in readiness, half disposed to believe in McPhee the gamekeeper. Just where I saw the bird spring, suddenly up went a fine woodcock. No winged bird she, but in full possession of the excellent pair that had not long before brought her (I suppose, for we do not know) from Finland, or elsewhere in the north of Argyll. I unhooded and cast "Taillie" after her, and the flight began. This woodcock would have much astonished sportsmen only used to their actions in a thick covert. Up and up she went in long zigzags, with precisely the style and action of her small relative, the common snipe, but mute. The falcon mounted rapidly in her train, though at a considerable disadvantage at first. I saw it was going to be a long affair, got out my glasses, and lay down on the heather, and on one side was my then falconer, Jamie Barr, one of the well-known family of Scotch falconers. There were once a father and three sons of that name (all falconers by profession), with most acute and trained vision, and on the other side the proud possessor of

the best pair of eyes in all Argyll, if not in the West of Scotland—the so-called “fox-hunter’s” son, my gillie, Sandy Kennedy. This man got much employment in seeking sheep lost on the hills and mountains, and long practice had rendered his ancestral eyesight (his father’s had been as good) equal to most glasses on the moor. The woodcock, with the falcon below and behind her, did not dare to come down or return—*vestigia nulla retrorsum* was her motto—and soon the pair of dots were high over the sea-loch, there a mile wide, the cock’s point being evidently Morven, on the other side of the strait. Soon I called out, “I can see but one.” Presently from Barr came, “I canna see them;” from Kennedy, “I ken ’em fine!” I hardly believed he could, for my own eyes were then far above the average, and, aided by the best of Voigtlander’s field-glasses, it was as much as I could do. Presently methought that the single dot in the sky which I still discerned became, instead of fainter, faintly more visible. “They are coming back,” quoth Kennedy, and before long the spot had visibly increased, and the falconer Barr declared that he saw them once more. So did I, and so did all before long; for the woodcock, finding herself over the water, and unable to shake off her pursuer or gain the distant haven of Morven, had no alternative but to seek the shelter of the bracken on our side, from whence she sprang; so the poor fowl turned tail and “went for it” in a long slanting descent from an incredible altitude. As they both neared us they presented the appearance of two little balls falling out of the

sky right towards us, and quite straight, with the difference (fatal to the poor woodcock) that "Taillie," who began below her, was now well above. The hawk was evidently unwilling or afraid to stoop over the water, but the moment the cock was over the land she shot herself forward, and straight in air, instead of slanting, half perpendicularly down, like her quarry (both moving with incredible speed, turned over, and stooped. No one knows the speed of a falcon's stoop, but it must be very great, as I have seen it bring a hawk up to old grouse flying hard down wind, just as though they had been sitting still, with absurd ease, if only she be but high enough. Anyhow, it was fatal this time to the woodcock, for, leaving a cloud of feathers behind, she tumbled head over heels before us into the very patch of bracken she came from, and meeting there with an old anthill, bounded off it many a yard and lay still. The hawk soon recovered herself, and dashed on to her well-earned quarry. Needless to say I did not disturb her thereon, but served out the whisky, and we drank her health all round. Then we too set to work at our lunch, and when this very tame pet hawk had nearly done hers, I went up to her and took her up, and having replaced the swivel in her jesses and the leash in her swivel, and cleaned her feet and wiped her beak and kissed her, I fastened her to a stone in a lonely burn close by, and witnessed her bathe and dry herself in the sun, preening her feathers to her and our entire satisfaction, and I trust to the satisfaction of the readers of my tale.

THE FALCONER'S CADGE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LIEUT.-COL. H. WATSON



John F. Thompson, California

As I presume that the account of flights will be found more amusing, if not more interesting, than the drier details of training a hawk, I am induced to try and describe a flight at our finest bird of game—*Tetrao lagopus*—the well-known red grouse of the British Islands. This fine bird, in the practical absence of flights (save very occasional ones) at the heron, the wild duck, and the woodcock, is certainly now (in my opinion, at least) the best flight remaining to modern Falconry. A most sporting bird, and, like Sir John Falstaff, the cause of sport to others, endowed with strength, wildness, great speed and endurance, fairly plentiful, prized by all (especially as an article of diet by the peregrine!), and above all, to be found, and to be found only, on the open moor—what better quarry can a falconer wish? His falcon wishes for no better. A grouse is entirely to her mind at all times, and she does her very best when flying it. As long as grouse will lie to the point of a dog—in some few parts of Scotland for a month in the season; in my own case in Northumberland about two days only (although I *have* known them packed and inaccessible on the 12th of August!)—we use dogs to find them, setters being generally preferred, although my best dog for hawking has been for many years a pointer. Dogs used for this purpose are trained to range out very far and wide, and to be very staunch on the point. I have known some to wait thus motionless, or perhaps lying down at last like a “dropper,” for fully half-an-hour. In my young days dogs bred between pointer and setter frequently used to “drop” on the

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point ;¹ now-a-days very few setters ever do so or "set." On coming to a firm point, I usually turn my field-glass on the dog, and as we well know each dog's actions, we can usually distinguish a point at game from one where game has only been. Grouse leave a strong scent, except in the middle of the day. The report being favourable, off goes the hood, and the hawk (let us call her "Lady Jane Grey," my favourite passage falcon of eight years' service, the very highest mounter I have ever seen) is off the fist. The rest of the hawks to be employed that day are carried by their attendant on the "cadge." This contrivance is depicted in Landseer's "Return from Hawking." It is a wooden frame, very light, with four legs (those of mine shut up on springs when required); the sides are padded, all four of them. The man steps inside when the hawks have been secured to the sides on which they stand. A pair of braces are crossed over his shoulders, and taking hold with each hand of one of the wooden sides, at a handle placed in the middle thereof, he and his charges accompany the hawking party all day long.

In less time than I have employed since mentioning "Lady Jane" last, we may confidently hope that she has made the best use of her time, and as-

¹ A cross-bred dog of this kind, much valued by its owner, is mentioned in Col. Hamilton's "Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman" (1860), and a portrait of it is given, vol. i. p. 12. He says :—"The best dog I ever possessed was a first cross between a pointer and setter, and so highly did I prize her, that I verily believe no sum of money would have tempted me to part with her. She had an exquisite nose, ranged with rapidity over the field, and never tired on the hottest days of August and September" (vol. ii. p. 52).

cended to a great altitude, either against the wind, and then returning to us, or, in a calm day, beating up and up, with regular beat of wings, in wide circles. This fine flier, at her best, will often mount too high if possible; at least, she has occasionally gone up clean out of sight of eyes however good, and field-glass also, in clear blue sky; but the game being found by the dog, we are able to exhibit it to her just when we please. "Now, sir, now," says James Rutford, my falconer, always impatient. "She is high enough, plenty." "Do let her have it, Fisher," says some equally impatient friend. But I like to see a hawk high, and often keep them waiting, though it is not well to cause an impatient or low-flying or young inexperienced hawk to wait long. They straggle off, and eventually get badly served, if at all. The hawk to kill game is one that knows her business, knows the dog, and what his point means as well as he does, and will not leave him on any account. The standing dog is her "lure," and before long, with a falconer's shout, James has at length gone up to the dog, and put up what grouse are before him. Let no one think that grouse care much for a hawk over them after a time or two. They certainly do lie the better for her presence on the moor, but later on in the season they won't have it from the dog at all. We then cast off a steady hawk on reaching any likely place, or even on coming into sight of a likely place, as the shaking of a plaid will cause wild grouse to rise many hundred yards ahead. Well, the grouse have risen, and one

of them for the very last time, for here comes "Lady Jane." Would that I could describe that singular stoop of hers better. It appears to begin by her throwing herself forward some yards, then over she turns, and head foremost she flies down earthwards, moving her wings rapidly, with marvellous swiftness. Let the grouse rise wild—let them even come unexpectedly over a hill and under the hawk, and she is round and down, and into the flying pack, or covey, with ease that seems portentous to men used to their approach towards their butts in a down wind "drive." "Lady Jane's" stoop generally brings her down a few yards behind her quarry, occasionally, but not often, on it. More commonly she becomes level, almost too quickly for the eye to follow, and instantly is with the grouse she selects. 'Tis all over with the poor thing then. A cloud of feathers, the sound of a heavy blow—if you are near enough to hear—and the grouse (dead, I think very often) is hurled many a yard through the air, and falls to the ground. If this ground should be hard, I have seen a grouse so struck down wind bound again (in one case eighteen yards) as they do when shot dead from the butts in a breeze. The blow is given by the falcon's strong hind-talon on each foot, usually as sharp as a needle, and driven at great speed, by a bird weighing 2 lbs. This blow is not to be despised. No hawk that stoops from a very lofty pitch can clutch or grasp her prey; she rushes upward like a ball from a trap, a couple of gunshots high, turns over, and is on the grouse at

once. There she sits, and with two or three powerful bites the grouse is literally decapitated, his head generally lying beside him. The head and the neck (though too much, I know) are usually "Lady Jane's" reward after every kill. She can kill four such grouse in a day—three are, however, enough; and she will be well fed on the last old grouse we may have taken, after her third successful, or, in fact, unsuccessful flight.

I was once fishing on the banks of the river Orrin, when I rented Glenorrin and Glengowrie in Argyllshire, and put up three greyhens, old birds, stouter and larger far than red grouse. Down came a wild falcon at the middle bird. I saw and heard the blow. The greyhen staggered on, leaving the usual tribute of feathers behind her; up rose the falcon in the grand and stately style so few trained hawks can ever adopt or regain—so much do they lose by captivity; over, and down she came, and down fell the quarry as though she had had an ounce bullet through her. Down went my long rod, and off I went. My distant shout sent off that falcon, though I fully believe "Lady Jane" was ever well pleased to see James or me come up, approving highly of shouting, and ready at any time to leave a grouse and jump on the fist for the least bit of meat, and sometimes for none at all. I took possession—somewhat meanly, I trow—of the wild hawk's prey, and this is what I found she had done to it. The three first ribs on one side were cut clean through, and separated from the backbone as by a chop with a heavy knife and strong

hand, and with one talon she had split the base of the skull, from which the brains exuded !

Later in the season, when grouse are wild and full-grown fine birds, say in October, the sport is the best. We then make a wide line of five or six men abreast, and eighty yards or more apart, the man bearing the hawk being usually in the centre. He casts her off, and directly she is aloft a whistle or wave of hand, and we move on. A dog ranges wide, but is not much attended to, for he seldom now gets much chance to point. Now is the time to see the grouse fly. Rising wild, and good at either cutting through a head-wind with driving wing, and close compact body, or careering down it, their pace is good. A Yorkshire keeper seeing a hooded hawk for the first time with me, laughed to scorn the idea of her catching one. "She canna speed the buds," quoth he ; but she soon undeceived him as to this. The "stoop" comes from a high altitude generally, and much more time having been afforded the falcon, she either slays the grouse or "puts it in."

Every creature with which I am acquainted, and I believe every insect, has some peculiar way (*i.e.* peculiar to its tribe) of escaping from its enemies. Grouse, at all events, possess plenty of brains in their small heads, and shift in the air from the stoop towards the end of the season, by a singular spring or shoot upwards, a few inches before the hawk's talons can touch them, and very much surprised she seems at this manœuvre. Their usual method is, however, to stop short in their

most rapid flight, and hurl themselves to the ground instantly. This should be seen to be at all believed. The very first time I ever saw it performed close to me was over the stony and rocky bed of a burn in Cheshire, into which an old cock-grouse, hotly pursued, precipitated himself. Well, he is done now, methought—a clear case of suicide. I'll pick up the little there can be left of him. I marked the very spot ; no grouse, no blood, not a feather about. No, but to my astonishment, up jumped a grouse, well and strong, from the stones at my feet. Down came the disappointed but now rejoicing hawk ; and I have just wiped my pen on a pen-wiper ornamented with the stuffed head of that fine old grouse, killed in the first week of December. The falcon on that occasion was "Islay," belonging to my friend, the Rev. Gage Earle Freeman. If I add that my grouse in Northumberland, contrary to their usual habit, have a trick of flying into thick covert of young and old fir trees on the moor, like black-game, I have done with this fine sporting quarry.

My eyess falcon, "Lundy," six years old, killed in 1885 seventy partridges, and in 1889, sixty-four grouse and a teal. The partridge is a sporting little fowl, though not to be compared to the denizen of the heather. I have usually a few coveys on my moor, where they appear to feed on the seeds of a rush, and are smaller and darker than partridges usually are. On the open downs and expanse of arable land in South Wilts I have hawked them regularly for many years, using good dogs, and pos-

sessing two of the best partridge hawks—tiercels or males, and nestling peregrines—procurable. It is, of course, indispensable to possess or rent a sufficient extent of suitable ground, well stocked with partridges, and the right to preserve them upon it : 2000 or 3000 acres is quite necessary, if not more, for good sport and success. The fixed idea "that hawking drives birds off the land" is everywhere prevalent, and utterly unremovable. This prejudice militates heavily against even renting grouse or partridge ground for our present purpose. It happens to be a perfectly erroneous idea, from a common-sense point of view, but it is useless to attempt to discuss it, nor will I write about it here. Suffice it to say, that the constant presence of two or more wild peregrine falcons, living very much indeed on my own and neighbours' partridges, not only never drove our numerous partridges away, but was not thought to do so ; whereas two or three naturally inferior tame hawks, not to be named in the same week with the wild ones in regard to their ability to take partridges, were believed to drive all our game away ! Luckily they did not. On the contrary, it was our neighbour's lands, when hard shot, that were bare, whilst ours, being kept quiet from the report of the gun, proved a land of plenty (for partridges), to our great content, and, I suppose, to our neighbour's disgust. But they stuck to their text just the same !

Every flight at partridges differs in its details, a circumstance which adds materially to the charm of hawking. The two best days I can remember

were twelve partridges one day and fourteen on the next—both in October. I remember once killing a partridge with a perfect little game-hawk called "Lundy," from his birthplace in the Bristol Channel, and who, before a surly neighbour killed him to save a pigeon from his clutches, had taken more than four hundred partridges in his five years of service, besides two kestrels; for some falcons are desperately fond of going at any wild hawk. This little fellow had done enough one day, when a neighbour's keeper came up and asked to see a flight. "Too late," said I, for the other hawks had been fed up. Just then the dog we had, a ceaseless worker and finder, came to a dead point in some high clover. Quite forgetting what I was about, I pulled off the hawk's hood and cast him off; but, to my horror, with the swivel in his jesses, and the leash—a yard and a quarter long—dangling down. Few hawks, I hope, thus adorned or encumbered, have ever been asked to take partridges. But it seemed to make little difference to this old hand. Up he went in wide rings, and as fast, apparently, as ever, with his ridiculous appendages, and when high enough the partridges were flushed, and he stooped and killed one with little ado, much to the keeper's delight.

On another occasion I may be said to have "shot at a pigeon and killed a crow," for I flew at a partridge and killed an old female sparrow-hawk. This very unusual occurrence happened in this wise. Late in the afternoon of an October day we tried our last flight, using a powerful and very keen Irish

falcon called "Erin." She was very hungry, as usual, and after a long wait, birds being scarce, got a bad chance at distant partridges, and finally lost them in covert. The only bird of any kind I had seen for half-an-hour previously had been a female sparrow-hawk hunting for her supper, and apparently not likely to get it. I lured up the hawk; and "Here she comes," I heard my servant cry. And come she did; but in a moment, distant speck as she was, my glass showed me her wings in the rapid action of desperate speed, and not moving with the leisurely beat of a hawk coming to a "lure," which has no such attractions for her as the sight of live quarry moving before her. What could it mean? I felt convinced there were no partridges for half a mile, and I felt sure there was nothing else, save a wood-pigeon safe in a distant belt of Scotch firs. However, on came the falcon straight for us (hence my man's very natural mistake), and unmistakably flying *something*, for she passed very rapidly high overhead, utterly ignoring the proffered "lure." "Whatever can it be?" "Can't imagine, sir." Right in front of us, 300 yards off and high in air, was the sparrow-hawk, the only bird in sight, and I felt convinced that the falcon, absurd as it seemed, was bent on her capture! So I got on my horse (we always have one out and near at hand) and rode off. And well I did, for I saw one of the finest flights I have ever seen, wrought out entirely by strength of wing and good footing, high in air, between two birds of prey. No covert, not a twig was there for an im-

mense distance, her wings alone the only hope the sparrow-hawk then possessed. Do what she would in the way of flying, within a short time the falcon was high above her, and round and down in her first stoop. A clever shift, and the falcon was far below her, and the sparrow-hawk fifty yards nearer the distant firs. Another, and yet another stoop, both cleverly evaded; then passion seemed to seize the falcon, for she "ringed up" to twice the height she had hitherto deemed necessary, poised herself for the half second required, and stooped. This time she did better, and a cloud of feathers followed in the wake of her stroke. This was a settler. She was soon again above her quarry, and the next stoop struck it dead, 100 yards above my head. The sparrow-hawk fell into the high turnips, and there, by the sound of her bell, I found the Irish falcon coolly eating her hard-won and revolting meal, in the shape of an old female sparrow-hawk, the destroyer of hundreds of larks and small birds in her many years of rapine, with her head lying by her side. I took up this "Erin," and gave her something better to eat, for the flight was worth that of a score of partridges, and went home with the only sparrow-hawk I ever saw or heard of as taken by a trained falcon.

It may be said that the sparrow-hawk at her best is no such great flier, but I suppose it will be admitted that the merlin *can* fly. Well, I have twice seen the before-mentioned little "Lundy" tiercel (with all the disadvantages of a tame and captive hawk, so largely deprived of the proper

daily exercise of his wings enjoyed by his wild congeners, who have to catch their food, not having it given to them at the block) engage with a wild merlin in the open, and each time with conspicuous ability and success. In actual speed he was much the better of the two, whilst his stooping and footing (he being very fond of flying at any wild hawk he met) left little to be desired. The first merlin escaped into covert, after being chased for five minutes, within an inch of his life. On the second occasion, no covert being nigh, I really thought we should soon have had to boast of that all but impossible feat—the capture of a wild merlin by a tame falcon! Three times did the tiercel's stoop beat the merlin down on his way to a distant hedge—his only hope. I was mounted, and saw it well. The last of the three stoops sent the ladies' hawk rolling on the dusty clods, and had I been up in time, he would never have got into the hedge a foot in front of "Lundy," as he contrived to do.

Pulling out the leaden weight attached by a cord to the horse's bit from the pistol-holster above my left knee, which all falconers use, and dropping it on the ground to tether the horse, I soon had the merlin out, to be again instantly dashed into the hedge by the tiercel. Time after time did I do this, till my men ran up, and if we could then have kept our heads cool, the merlin must have been ours (or "Lundy's"), for the hedge ended *on the open down*, and once driven out there, the "who-hoop" would soon have sounded for him, as it has done for many a magpie under similar

conditions! Alas! (for us) we drove the merlin the *wrong* way, towards a building and yard ornamented—but not *then* in our eyes—by a fine walnut tree. The ill-used merlin just managed to get from the end of the hedge into the middle of the walnut tree, which we were all too exhausted to climb. Needless to say he was utterly indifferent to shouts, stones, and sticks, as well he might be. And there we left him quit for the fright; for of course I turned a deaf ear to the vile proposition of the bailiff to lend me his gun. This proposition seemed awful to me, and strangely enough, perhaps, for we had but just before been moving heaven and earth to catch the said merlin by foot of another falcon. And there we will leave “Lundy,” whose performances as a game-hawk I have seldom seen surpassed. I saw him in Ireland strike down no less than three grouse out of one covey at one time, and found him with the third in his foot; and he wound up his day by joining a wild female peregrine, and going three or four miles away seaward with her. My man lured him down with a pigeon eventually, and brought him home. If I say that I have many times seen this little hawk strike down two partridges out of the same covey in Gloucestershire, I think we may admit that he, at least, did his best for “Modern Falconry.”

One more specimen of Gloucestershire partridge-hawking and I have done. Long ago I was using a very steady old pointer, my man carrying “Tigress” and I “Blanche,” two good eyess falcons. “Blanche” was specially fond of me, but

* no one else could fly her, for no one else could take her up, nor would she feed on my servant's hand, though she knew him well. In my absence, her food had to be given to her on the ground at the block or on her perch.

The dog had found birds in high turnips. I cast off "Blanche," who was soon very high, and we two leisurely went up to the dog, who was standing. The dog was her "lure," and she followed him regularly, high over his head. When within twenty yards of the dog, up got a fine covey, and down came the falcon. She picked up a partridge in her foot (a partridge is nothing for a falcon, and is easily carried even by a tiercel), and took it under a distant hedge. "Blanche" was so fond of me that she never would eat until I came up to her, and very seldom would even kill her quarry if she thought I was absent. I forgot this, and saying to my man, "That's the sort of hawk," I pointed her out with my gloved left hand. In a moment "Blanche" let the partridge go; the poor thing dashed off apparently quite unhurt, and the hawk was instantly on my glove and looking up in my face. I confess I felt like a fool, though I could not help feeling also pleased with my pet; so I rewarded her well, and walked about feeding her, for we did not intend to use her again that day. I did this leisurely, the day being fine, finally put her to rights—swivel into jesses, leash into swivel—wiped her beak, and put on her hood. As it was now the turn of the other falcon, "Tigress," I thought of the dog for the first time,

expecting to see old "Don" at the heels of my servant, as usual after a flight. Not a sign of him. "James, where is the dog all this time?" "Haven't an idea, sir." "Good gracious! look for him, and whistle." No result. The matter being serious—for Gloucestershire partridge-hawking needs the best of dogs, and best of work to kill—my trusty friend, my field-glass, was put to work, but with no result for some time. At last it showed me (fields are large at Coates, and near the College Farm) a white speck in the deep turnips, which a bright idea struck me resembled "Don's" nose! A nearer view thereof confirmed the fact, and "Tigress" was rapidly divested of her swivel, leash, and hood, and set going. She, too, mounted well in the breeze, and we retraced our steps after half-an-hour's absence to the very place from which our first flight had started. There stood the pointer, just as before, and as he had all along been standing, though we had heeded him not, and at the self-same birds. Of course the birds that rose for "Blanche" had not been *his* birds, for directly this hawk came well up and over (she cared little for me or any one, and all we got out of *her* had to be extorted) right in front of old "Don," we flushed another fine covey, one of which speedily fell into old "Tigress's" clutches, and eventually into ours, for we did not again find a hawk willing to let the quarry go.

I will add but one more incident in the too short life of this charming hawk, "Blanche," who killed my first wild grouse before my delighted eyes

on the Bala mountains, and I will bring these long musings to an end.

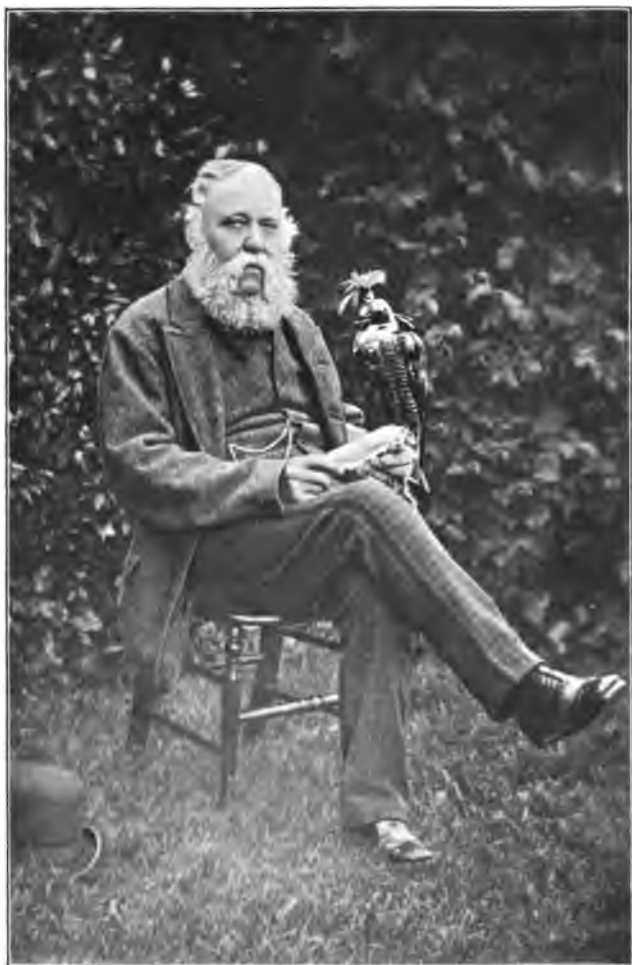
Imagine the same two, master and man, near the same place, and on the same errand, on a lovely serene late autumn day, just outside a big covert near Sapperton and Pimbury Park. Kept too long on the wing for half a mile, in hopes of seeing birds, which "Fan" could not, or would not, find, and rendered desperate by a final false point, off went "Blanche" over the wooded valley in pursuit of some wood-pigeon or magpie unseen by us. The country, unlike the Wiltshire Downs, is hopeless in this case. No view to be had, nor any means of getting one. "We have done it now: no use seeking her: I shall sit down and eat my lunch." And I did so, with my back to a gate, and a lovely field of white clover in front, full of its sweet perfume in the pleasant air. I enjoyed my repast, and said so. Not so my grumbling attendant, who declared he could not eat for thinking of his sufferings there on the morrow morning, when his duty would be to come up by the first train to seek the lost hawk, or to sleep at Tetbury Road Station, which he dreaded more. Lost hawks, of which I shall treat anon, are, as I think they were in old days and in all climes, the bane of modern Falconry! I had finished my lunch, my man had finished his pipe, and "Fan" had finished the scraps. We were thinking of leaving for the railway station whence we had come in the morning; for 'tis no use seeking a lost hawk in a series of deep wooded valleys—she might be sought when soaring high in air, looking out for

JOHN PELLs

**FORMERLY DEPUTY GRAND FALCONER IN THE SERVICE OF
THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS, HEREDITARY GRAND**

FALCONER OF ENGLAND

DIED MARCH 1883, AGED 68



herself, above or outside of such country—when I heard a hawk's bell sound, and instantly, with a swish of her wings, lo! "Blanche" on the top of the gate-post over my head! I had not found her, she had found me, as I was sure she would, unless she had killed, which seemed likely in this case from her protracted absence; and to this day I do not know that she had not. It was certain, however, by the look of her crop, that she had not fed; so taking a partridge that she had killed earlier in the day out of the bag, I flung it out to her close by, and she in her turn took her lunch, or, as our forefathers would have said, "her pleasure" thereon, the old dog crawling gently up to her and licking her feet.

These two were great friends. I have often seen the hawk, when tired of waiting for the dog to point, come down and give him a flip with her wings, and go up to her pitch again instantly.

It was a charming *tableau*, and I would have given much on that occasion for the presence of a skilful and sympathetic artist—such as Archibald Thorburn or George Lodge—who could have truthfully depicted in water-colours the well-remembered incident which I have here attempted to describe.

A MEMOIR OF JOHN PELL'S

DEPUTY-FALCONER OF THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS

AS the master from whom I first learnt the rudiments of Falconry, and through whose tuition I subsequently enjoyed so much of this fascinating sport, the name of John Pells will ever be held by me in grateful recollection; and it will be only a just tribute to his memory if I endeavour to set down in these pages what I have been able to collect concerning his career.

He was a son of old Jan Pells (or Peels), a native of Valkenswaard in North Brabant, where for generations past, and to the present day, the capture of passage falcons by professional hawk-catchers, on their annual southward migration or "passage," has made the place famous in the annals of Falconry. Born at Lowestoft in 1815, he assisted his father in 1828 in taking the passage hawks which were wanted for the Didlington Hawking Club, for which his father acted in the capacity of professional falconer.

His father being temporarily indisposed, he got Jan Bots to assist him in bringing over the hawks, and the following year these two again visited Holland and returned with a fresh lot of hawks.

On the return of Pells, senior, they both went to Lowestoft, where they resided for some time as falconers to the Duke of Leeds and the Earl of Aberdeen ; Pells the father leaving shortly after to enter the service of the Duke of St. Albans, the Hereditary Grand Falconer of England, where the son subsequently joined him, the hawks being then kept at Highgate.

In 1840 the subject of this memoir went to Ireland to look after Mr. O'Keefe's hawks, and while there he trained some excellent falcons, with which he showed good sport at rooks on the Curragh of Kildare. Two years later he was helping the members of the Loo Hawking Club, who had so many birds that it required the services of eight falconers, of whom John Pells was one, to look after them. It was he who brought over to Mr. Edward Clough Newcome at Feltwell, Norfolk, the two wonderful heron-hawks, " Sultan " and " De Ruyter," with which in 1843 he killed the extraordinary number of fifty-four herons in Norfolk, and fifty-seven the following year in Holland.¹

In one of the plates to Schlegel & Wolverhorst's "*Traité de Fauconnerie*" these two hawks are represented as having just finished a flight at a heron, surrounded by the members of the Loo Hawking Club, King William III. of the Netherlands in their midst. Mr. Newcome is seen holding his horse near Jan Bots, who is taking up one of these hawks from off the heron, whilst the subject of this memoir,

¹ See the memoir of Newcome, with portrait, given in Harting's "*Bibliotheca Accipitraria*," 1891.

John Pells himself, is busy taking down the other hawk with a pigeon.

In 1845 Pells went to Iceland to catch falcons, and brought back fifteen Icelanders. Seven of these were kept by the Duke of Leeds, the other eight being given by him to the Loo Hawking Club; the best of them being probably a tiercel called "Morok."¹

From 1850 to 1854 Pells used to go over every year to Holland for hawks, and to see the heron-hawking at the Loo, the summer palace of the King of Holland, near Apeldoorn. After living for some time at Feltwell, Mr. Newcome's residence, where the hawks were kept, he removed to Lakenheath, near Brandon, where he settled down on a pension from the Duke of St. Albans. He continued to keep a few hawks for his own amusement, and used to train others for amateurs, to whom also he for some time supplied hoods, leashes, swivels, and other requisites. From being constantly accustomed to handle hawks from his childhood, his management of them was perfect, his dexterity in hooding and skill in "imping" or repairing a broken feather being also marvellous.

¹ I am inclined to think, on reflection, that "Morok" was netted by Newcome himself in Norway, whither in 1845 he repaired with Jan Bots and Jan van den Boom for the purpose of catching falcons. I have heard many interesting anecdotes of this bird, which was trained by him to the "premier" flight at the heron. I believe but little success attended the efforts of the Loo Club falconers to make these gerfalcons into good heron-hawks, and after many attempts, they discontinued their efforts in favour of passage peregrine falcons, which time out of mind have been annually taken near Valkenswaard in Holland, and at a tithe of the trouble and expense of procuring gerfalcons from Norway or Iceland.

At Lakenheath he continued to reside until his death in 1883, when he passed peacefully away on March 24th, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

It was at Lakenheath, in 1858, that I first made his acquaintance and learnt to put in practice some of his precepts. From him I bought the first trained hawk I ever possessed, a tiercel called "Black Prince," of which more anon.

I spent a considerable time with him, on different occasions, at Feltwell, endeavouring to learn and practise as much as I could of the training and management and keeping of hawks, being then, like most beginners, profoundly ignorant of such matters. Nor were my efforts, I think, entirely without success, thanks to Mr. Newcome's kindness. From him—a past-master of the art—I certainly heard a great deal about Falconry, and especially about heron-hawking as practised at the Loo, as well as at Hockwold and Feltwell in Norfolk. There, I am sorry to think, my acquaintance with this branch of the sport ended, for from the almost insuperable difficulties now surrounding it in England, and the disinclination of the King of Holland to allow any further heron-hawking at the Loo, it has not been practised here from that day to this. Pells probably knew more about this fine flight than any other, though it was difficult to get any sort of teaching from him. He had a very poor opinion of any gentleman-falconer's skill or competence, save only his old master, the Squire of Feltwell. He gave me, however, every chance of seeing and trying to acquire his own manual dexterity in many

details, and I acquired a fair amount of skill in hooding, imping, &c., though in this I never could approach him. I found him usually a morose, silent man, though he thawed now and then under the influence of his favourite gin, or Hollands, and his pipe, which he was seldom without. He used to "hack" a few young eyesses from Feltwell yearly. In the heart of the best partridge-shooting in Norfolk this was an undertaking hardly likely to be very successful; nor was it. The best of them succumbed to the keepers' guns and traps, or the legion of unauthorised gunners to be found everywhere; and though Mr. Newcome's well-known love of hawking (which in my day he did not practise much at Feltwell, preferring to shoot partridges rather than to hawk them) may have saved the lives of a few, many of course were lost. However, I myself occasionally got a good hawk "hacked" by Pells, amongst which I still remember "The General," "Pearl," "The Cardinal," and my first venture of eyesses from Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel. In such a game-preserving county as Norfolk, Pells had no chance of getting leave to hawk partridges, and the country around Feltwell is not open enough for the sport. As for rook-hawking, we were soon reduced, or rather Pells was, to fly the hawks at bagged pigeons, and an occasional stone-curlew, when this fine bird could be found; so I usually trained my own hawks there, and departed for my home in Gloucestershire, where Pells came to me sometimes, and once I took him with me to Scotland. On the whole, I have

very kindly recollections of my queer-tempered preceptor in hawking. He lost his excellent wife some years before his own death. I think he was fairly comfortable to the end, and found a good friend in the Incumbent of Lakenheath. With him departed the last practitioner in England of the Dutch School of Hawking.

I had always been desirous of seeing the gerfalcon assume her former "pride of place" amongst all the various hawks used in modern Falconry, and tried hard with half-a-dozen Icelanders, and two or three Greenlanders; but could do nothing with them. Pellis always maintained that the way to treat the three Northern gerfalcons *as trained hawks* was now lost; and that his own father, Jan Pellis, was the last European falconer who understood the matter. They have in my time been frequently tried, but with little or no success. Their tempers are usually found to be vile; they are so touchy about their hoods and hooding, that they really require the singular skill in making and (there is the rub) keeping them to the hood possessed by Pellis, and almost by him alone. Hunger affects them but little, and as they are not inclined to mount, and are too impatient to be got to "wait on," game-hawking is out of the question with them; while the kite being now nearly extinct in England, and herons almost inaccessible over open ground, I fear the day of the gerfalcon in this country is over.

I remember Pellis telling me that "Morok," Mr. Newcome's Iceland tiercel, did occasionally fly herons, but could not be flown with a companion,

because he invariably spent his time, and usually successfully, in catching, not the heron, but the heron-hawk he was used with. Mr. Newcome and Pells both constantly told me that they estimated the "gers" to be fully one-third swifter on the wing than any peregrine, and that certainly is my own impression from what I have seen. "Morok" was lost one day after a heron, by Mr. Newcome, either at Didlington or Hockwold, and many days afterwards, as the Dutch falconers at Loo were exercising or flying their hawks there, suddenly there appeared out of the sky a stranger hawk. "Why, here is Mr. Newcome's 'Morok,'" said they; and so it was. Needless to say they soon took him up, and sent word they had him safe. John Pells shortly afterwards went over to the Loo, and brought "Morok" back in triumph to Feltwell.

In this chapter I have attempted to set down only my own recollections of what I learned from Pells himself or from Mr. Newcome. Those who would read more concerning these two excellent falconers should consult Professor Newton's article on "Hawking in Norfolk," printed as an appendix to the second edition of Lubbock's "Observations on the Fauna of Norfolk," 1879, and Mr. Harting's valuable "Bibliotheca Accipitraria," published by Quaritch in 1891.

THE COURTSHIP OF THE WILD FALCON AND THE MODE OF TRAINING HER YOUNG

SOMETIME in April, ten or more years ago, I was out with my hawks on Chittern Down, Codford, Wilts, when, using my glasses in search of quarry for them, I saw, sitting on the Downs, two large birds whose species I could not at that distance determine. The glass, however, soon showed them to be, not, as I supposed, a pair of wood-pigeons, but actually a pair of fine peregrine falcons in adult plumage, sitting among some anthills on the open Down. This was a sight not over-common, and the movements of the birds were therefore a matter of deep interest to me. My glasses, fortunately, were good ones, and by means of them I soon saw that something unusual was going on; in fact, it became apparent that here was an amatory couple of these powerful birds of prey, in all probability but lately "mated," and now about to depart for nesting purposes from their usual wide hunting-ground on the Wiltshire Downs, on their annual visit to some rocky eyrie on the coast of Dorset or the Isle of Wight. The falcon, or female, seated on

an anthill, was quietly receiving the compliments which her mate was paying her close by.

Such of his courtship as I saw and was able to witness was of an unusual character for such a redoubted bird of prey. He was plainly endeavouring to please her and to ingratiate himself with her by grotesquely moving around the anthill on which she was sitting. With elongated neck and strangely held head he brought his bill almost close to the ground, by way of compliment, methought. His head seemed to be apparently increased in size by the raising of the feathers upon it. His tail was spread and bent in a curious way, so that the end of it was close to the ground, after the fashion of a house-pigeon. A falcon's attempts to move on level ground are scarcely more agile than those of a grey parrot similarly situated; for it has no idea of hopping, but crosses its legs as it walks, and with the toes turned in. This behaviour of the two hawks was continued for some time, with much quaint gesture, until, in fact, her ladyship condescended to come off her throne, and finally both flew away together. We then set forth again in quest of rooks, crows, or magpies.

I was flying an old falcon called "Privateer," the gift to me of Captain Salvin, and the time of the year being also April, she was in full nuptial plumage. She took to the soar—which is a falconer's term for a hawk enjoying the free use of her wings in warm sunny air—in wide lofty circles. Whilst thus engaged, hawks seem to forget their possible hunger and the attractions of the lure.

Thus felt "Privateer." I tempted her with every lure in my possession, but she only rose higher and higher, till she became a mere speck in the blue sky. Out came my glasses, and I said to my attendant, "It is a hundred to one that we lose the old lady;" for, after half-an-hour of such soaring, a trained hawk is as likely as not to descend to earth three or four miles off, in which case she is generally found to have killed prey for herself, and may have to be sought for during many hours without success.

I heard my attendant say, "There are two of 'em," and suddenly there appeared two hawks instead of one in the field of my glasses. No one within fifty miles kept trained hawks; I had not lost one for a long time; so one of these was a wild bird. Round and round the tame one circled the wild hawk. In vain we displayed the lure once more. Neither hawk took any notice of it. It was evident from the much smaller size of the stranger that he was a male of the species; and my knowledge of their habits convinced me that if his courting should prove successful, his intention was to carry off my beautiful "Privateer" to be his mate. She was an unusually docile bird, and as tame as a hawk may be—so much so, that until then she had never given us any fear of losing her, and, in fact, was as little disposed to lose us as we were to lose her. It became strikingly apparent that, despite the earnest solicitations of her companion, she did not remove herself very far from the spot, and, though at a great altitude, was probably

always within half a mile of us. This continued for some time, during which our lures were in constant use, and finally we were deeply gratified to see "Privateer" somewhat lower in the air, descending with her companion still in attendance to have another look at us.

This time the proffered lure proved irresistible, at all events to the tame hawk, for, closing her wings, down she came, and within a few seconds was within a yard of us and enjoying the tempting meal. Needless to say, her example was not followed by the wild tiercel, whose lovely blue back, contrasting with the light breast lit up by the rays of the sun, was plainly visible to us as he mournfully took his departure—a disappointed suitor.

The extraordinary speed of the stoop of the wild falcon, and the adroit manner in which she uses her foot in the act of catching her prey, contrast forcibly with the awkward stoop and constantly unsuccessful attempts at "grabbing" exhibited by an eyess falcon brought up by the hand of man. This difference of method and of ability of execution is often brought before the notice of any one who flies tame hawks where wild ones may be seen. In fact, though nestlings well fed and cared for, and with perfect wings and tail feathers, will show considerable power of flight, yet, accustomed to receive their food from the hand of man, without being troubled to catch it (even during a period of perfect liberty, when flying "at hack"), they have no need to display their utmost powers of stooping and seizing prey, though while at hack they undoubtedly do now

and then catch prey for themselves. It is true that some are more clumsy than others. If in the hands of an unskilful owner, a falcon may remain comparatively stupid and useless to the end of her life. But, even so, if through being lost she gets a holiday for a month or more, and escapes the guns of the thoughtless slayers of all rare or beautiful birds, then, having to catch her own dinner as best she may, or go without it—a course highly distasteful to a hungry hawk—the tame falcon sometimes repairs the injury man has done her, and acquires a speed of wing and readiness of foot which remind a spectator of the powers of the wild bird. But on account of her great tameness when first lost, she usually soon falls a victim to the gun.

The young wild hawk learns from its parents the art of catching prey, and I was once a witness of a lesson given by an old falcon to her three young ones.

I was fishing a wild loch in Argyllshire, in company with my falconer, near some precipitous cliffs, which sloped almost, or quite, into the dark surface of the water, when I heard the well-known cry of a young hawk to its parent. Looking up, I soon saw three young peregrine falcons sitting side by side on a shelf of rock immediately overhanging the water, and within the range of my field-glass.

In a moment there sailed into view the parent falcon, whom the young had perceived long before we could possibly do so ; she came like a dot out of the sky, and made straight for her vociferous young.

We were satisfied that she was going to feed them, for she carried, though with the greatest ease, quite a large bird, which we both thought to be an adult red grouse.

Truly she was going to feed them, but her intention was to give them first a lesson in the art of catching prey for themselves. She poised herself high above the shelf on which her young were sitting, and, to my great surprise, dropped the bird she was carrying. She had so arranged her position that the bird fell clear of the rock as it passed towards the lake. Instantly young one No. 1 dashed off the cliff, and apparently quite accustomed to what she was expected to do, hurled herself in a beautiful stoop, and actually succeeded in catching the bird, whatever it was, before it reached the water—to my tolerably experienced eyes a very clever performance. However, she had no chance to enjoy it, for down came the old falcon almost as soon as she had reached the bird, and with the most graceful but powerful ease snatched it from her grasp, and ascended in rapid rings to the height of several hundred feet. The discontented bird, with far greater difficulty, returned to the rocky shelf. The old hawk repeated the manœuvre, dropping the prey this time in front of young one No. 2. They must all have known their lesson well, for neither No. 1 nor No. 3 ventured to stir. It was No. 2 that started in pursuit, and, like her sister, succeeded in intercepting the falling prey before it reached the water. The old hawk did precisely as before, rending the prey from her with the same stern facility, and leaving her

forlorn. She had hardly reached her proper altitude when she again dropped it, this time in front of No.

3. He, for I fancied the first two were the largest in size, was perfectly willing and adroit enough to emulate the success of his companions. But he too was not allowed to possess the prize for an instant in peace, for, plucking it out of his grasp, and ascending to the shelf in question, the old hawk tore it to pieces and divided it, as it seemed to us, pretty equally amongst her hungry and expectant progeny. I was naturally greatly interested in this incident, and have constantly mentioned it, for I venture to believe that I am almost the only naturalist or falconer who has been gratified with such a sight within easy distance.

A FLIGHT AT THE CARRION CROW

I HAVE often thought that the fact of one of a pair of monogamous birds at breeding-time being able, almost immediately, to repair the loss of a mate, has hardly attracted the notice it deserves. There can, I think, be little doubt that the larger, at all events, of our wild birds are paired for life, and not alone for their brief yearly season of incubation. Circumstances such as the winter's great scarcity of food, &c., may apparently divide them, but I think that they are paired still. Though not constantly in one another's company, as in spring, they are never very far apart. However, as the many enemies of birds—of which, of course, by far the greatest is man with his gun—do constantly make widows and widowers of many a happily-mated pair of birds, it is perhaps as inevitable as it is true that, when a separation does take place, the survivor proceeds at once to console her or himself with a fresh mate. This is done with the least possible loss of time, provided only that the breeding season be close at hand. Of course rooks, crows, jackdaws, magpies, kestrels, sparrow-hawks, and such like can never be at much of a loss for a new partner when thus bereaved. But (as the peregrine falcon is never likely to be long absent

A GROUSE-HAWKING PARTY

J. E. HARTING (with "Lundy"), WM. RUTFORD (*assistant-falconer*, with "Young Princess"),
ARTHUR NEWALL (with "Old Princess"), JAS. RUTFORD (*falconer*, with "Lady Jane Grey")



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from the falconer's page) I would fain inquire whence does the suddenly unmated falcon procure a fresh partner, and return, as he or she most assuredly does, in a very short space of time, to the rocky seaside eyrie of their choice, once more one of a happy breeding pair? This, which to my own knowledge is of not infrequent occurrence, is remarkable enough, in view of the increasing scarcity of this fine species, though I know that there is also but little limit to the power of vision, altitude, and speed of flight with which it is endowed. Be this as it may, I will proceed to mention how the common black carrion crow (*Corvus corone*) proceeds under similar circumstances, and may call it "A Story of a Widowed Crow."

By way of preface, I would say that in the course of my earlier hawking experiences I persisted in flying trained eyess falcons at rooks in an enclosed part of Gloucestershire. I venture to mention this fact because tracts of open unenclosed land are rare enough in England at the present time, and because many a beginner in Falconry lives far from any open downland or moorland country, in which alone long-winged hawks can be used at any quarry with pleasure or success. He thus goes in quest of the wily rook day after day in wholly unsuitable country. Such, at least, were my own proceedings for many a year, and *laudator temporis acti*, as I well may now be, I think, on the whole, they comprised many of the happiest of my hawking days. Happy, then, is the falconer in an enclosed country who will be thankful for small mercies when they *do*

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come, and cheerfully and knowingly face the toils and hardships of a difficult and arduous sport for the sake of the pleasure which his hard-earned successes occasionally yield him.

I once was able to score thirty-two partridges, eight rooks, a crow, a wood-pigeon, and a magpie in one season, in this probably the worst country in England for such flights, with the peregrine. The goshawk at rabbits, possibly at hares, is the hawk for an enclosed country. Personally I have never been able to take a liking to the goshawk, and have never used one myself. Eventually I had to give up the use of the peregrine for partridges amongst the high hedges and four-acre fields of my native county (though I stuck to them longer than I did to rooks); and having one of the best of falcons for such work, a dog unsurpassed at finding and standing the "put in" partridge, and an enthusiastic assistant, I transferred myself and my hawks to South Wilts, and afterwards to Northumberland.

I think I may say, without vanity, that I had on the open arable downland of South Wilts, its stubbles and turnips, for many a year as fine sport with partridges as heart could wish. Shame would it have been to me had I not, for I had some of the best possible partridge ground, and lots of it, in a ring fence at my service, good neighbours, and good dogs, of which I think my setters happened to be the best. Downland partridges in November are no mean quarry; in fact, I was always ready to back my hawks against a young farmer's gun in

that month, "driving" being little practised there, and beyond his resources.

I will now try to tell the tale of how in those earlier days—and in a very densely wooded and enclosed country—my falconer and I killed an old carrion crow with a single peregrine tiercel, called the "Cardinal," from a Dorsetshire eyrie. Falcons are deemed, and usually found to be, the best for both rooks and crows, as these sable birds, from their great power and skill in biting, prove more than a match for a tiercel. Not so, however, with the "Cardinal." I imagine he must have entered himself to rooks whilst a nestling "at hack," for he early showed a strong inclination for this quarry (usually more or less distasteful to a peregrine), and cared for little else. This was exactly what I had long desired and never could get; and as the gregarious rook lives mostly in flocks, whilst the pair of crows inhabiting a certain bit of country are alone seen together (save when they are accompanied by their young, and are engaged in teaching them their own nefarious pursuits), they frequently come in handy after the first flight at rooks has sent every rook away for several miles for the day. This last inevitable event is one of the many and all but insuperable difficulties of rook-hawking (whilst the rook continues to live in large flocks) that will beset the beginner. It was got over by the English and French falconers of the past by bringing the mountain to Mahomet, in the shape of rooks and crows, instead of poor Mahomet following the artful birds, unsuccessfully, all over the country. This was done

by means of the great owl—*Le Duc* of the French falconers—and most successfully, as is related by D'Arcussia (*Conference des Fauconniers*, p. 5, “de la Corneille”), and with more or less success by later falconers using the common owl, a cat, or, it is said, a weasel, or ferret of a light colour, tethered out in the open, with a single natural or artificial small tree close at hand. The great owl never failed to attract rooks, crows, jays, and magpies to annoy and mob him; and the cat and other vermin, I suppose, were meant to appeal to their curiosity. The falconers and hawks, of course, lay up in ambush somewhere, and waited for the result. So have I nearly all day long, but it came not (most likely for want of the owl), and I conjectured that the modern rook was, like the modern falconer, somewhat of a *fin de siècle* bird.

However, one day many a year ago, I well remember visiting the neighbourhood of Tarlton on the Cotteswolds, our most open country, on rook-hawking intent—my assistant armed with a pair of loud-cracking dog-whips, whilst on my glove was seated the “Cardinal.” This fine tiercel, as I have said, an excellent rook-hawk, was, alas! shot before I could take him to the real home of rook-hawking (the Wiltshire Downs), where from his great speed, courage, and clever footing, he would certainly have distinguished himself. He had, moreover, the great merit in a rook-hawk of being indifferent to the charms of partridges and pigeons, apparently preferring the sable quarry for which alone I used him, and for some unknown

reason he seemed to fly a crow with even greater zeal than a rook. This could not have been from want of courage, for I have seen him charge many hundreds of rooks in the air, gathered so closely together, as to give the appearance of their wings almost touching. I have often and often seen him ring up over them, and, when high enough for a real good stoop, cut one out, knock it about and catch it, still high up in air, in a style that would not have disgraced one of the best passage falcons of "the Old Hawking Club."

Whilst I was talking to a friendly farmer and looking about, without success, for any sign of rooks, a pair of carrion crows got up and settled in a very small and thin plantation of larch adjacent to a lonely barn, and entirely surrounded by the largest treeless fields of the district. This was in a stone wall country, and very free from hedges, though there was a large wood of high larch far too near to be pleasant. One of these crows (which afterwards turned out to be the male) left his mate in the low trees, and perched defiantly 150 yards off on the roof of the barn. He continued surveying us, little dreaming what fate had in store for him. The farmer at once burst out with a Gloucestershire execration at these sable birds, especially angry at their preternatural cunning, which he said always prevented him from trapping or shooting them. I inquired the reason of his wrath, and received the answer, that these "brutes" were as old as he was, or far older, and that no winter or spring ever passed without this very pair of crows

(as he believed) succeeding in either maiming or causing the death of one or more of his sheep, "cast" by accident in some ditch or otherwise. The farmer also said, that he had known them frequently to put out the eyes of weakly lambs, in order, said he, to get the better of them eventually when thus disabled. He had a gun in his hand and said, "What would I not give to shoot that old villain on the top of the barn!" I replied, "That no man living could do that in such a place; but I really thought that, if he would stick to me, that little falcon of mine would very soon be able to procure him for him." Whereupon I slipped off the hawk's hood, and held him up that he might have a look at his friend on the barn. The crow displayed his well-known cunning, for the instant my hand was removing the hawk's hood he slipped down, silently and quickly, from the ridge to the other side of the barn and disappeared, like a shadow or a dream, from all sight. However, he did not accomplish this so quickly but that the sharp eyes of the tiercel got a glimpse of him, and with a bound he left my hand, like a greyhound from the leash, and went straight for the barn and its roof. I have often wondered at the instant readiness of a keen hawk to see a distant bird on the removal of the hood, the change from almost total darkness to bright sunshine not apparently affecting her vision in the least. Holloaing to my friendly farmer to follow us, my man and I (and we could both of us run in those days) made the best of our way towards what we knew would be the scene of a capital flight.

I at once saw that we had at last a chance in a wooded country of getting the better of one of the most *rusé* birds in the British Isles. Long before we reached the barn the tiercel had reached the crow, and was bringing him back in hot pursuit to his only reachable cover, the barn and the low trees ; and, after taking him round the buildings, and under the eaves, the crow succeeded in gaining the shelter of the thickest and most bushy of the small larches, where, with the loss of a few feathers, which floated loosely in the still air, he was hard "put in," and very well content to remain, being afraid to stir. When we came up we found him there with the tiercel standing sentry over him on the top of the tree. My servant on one side, and I on the other, did not let him stay there very long. We soon dislodged him with stones and cries, or tried to do so, though I have no doubt it was really by the cracking of our whips that we frightened him out of one tree only to slip into another. Oddly enough, neither rook, crow, nor magpie can usually be dislodged from such a place of shelter and in such danger by the sound of a gun or pistol—*experto crede*. To a great extent they are then insensible also to shouts, stones, or other rough missiles cast at them ; but the sharp crack of a dog-whip under them will commonly be found effective in causing them to leave the place and take wing, if only for a few yards at a time, and then into a similar refuge, for well they know that outside of it they are in peril from their winged adversary. This line of conduct is indispensable to a success-

ful "rook hunt," for it can hardly be called "rook flight," in an enclosed country. The beautiful and interesting struggle in the air, when the rook, finding no shelter below him, rings up as fast and well as he can in small circles (and very well he does it), whilst the falcon employed tries to gain the sky of him by very wide rings outside, is of course totally absent here; and absent too are the stoopings of the hawk, and the clever shifts of the rook from the deadly stroke. Let it not be here supposed that every flight at this wily bird and very competent flier is always crowned with success in a perfectly open country, any more than it is in a perfectly enclosed and hedged and wooded one. Failing trees and hedgerows, the hunted rook makes the very best use of what covert there is, and fights hard for his life, and more often than not, by aid of the eaves of cornstacks, barn roofs, outhouses, sheds, cattle, plough-teams, and even a flock of ewes and lambs penned in by hurdles, to the best effect, and by his cleverness lives to fight another day. A rook thus pressed, that can just get over the nearest hurdle in time, and hide under and amongst the sheep, is usually as safe as a hunted fox with an open earth before him and a few yards in front of the leading hound. In he goes, and out he seldom comes, for of course the hunting and efforts required are not possible in a frightened crowd of sheep and lambs, and he is usually left there and given up for lost, to the disappointment of both hawk and falconers, who have worked hard and long to find him in a suitable place for the attack. With regard to this

particular Gloucestershire crow at the juncture at which we left him, up came the farmer with his gun. He was delighted, and demanded leave to settle his long account with his old enemy by shooting him out of hand. This proposal did not suit me, however, and to consent to it would have been to take a mean advantage of the foe. At all events, I thought so, and proceeded to try to take him single-handed by the aid of a hawk of about his own size, and this I deemed a much fairer match of it. So we two did our very best, and so, to be sure, did the old crow; but the larches for once were rather low and thin, so that after changing his quarters perforce from tree to tree and to the top of the barn again many times, but always relentlessly pursued by my good little hawk, he got worse and the hawk got better, and at last ended the flight by catching him very adroitly just as he was returning, a second too late, to his familiar shelter in the biggest and thickest larch. The farmer took his body, my man his head, and his two black feet long adorned a wall on which many similar and many very different looking pairs of legs and feet were hung, quaint trophies of my earlier hawking successes.

With regard to the nidification of rooks, it is confidently believed by many falconers and game-keepers, and specially by that observant class of men, the shepherds on the Wiltshire Downs, that rooks are not adult and do not breed, and are not allowed by the others to make a nest, until they are fully two years old or upwards, and that the number of rooks of both sexes which, in the breeding season,

form the actual population of any one rookery outnumber the paired rooks which have made nests five or six-fold, and that these really consist of the young rooks of at least the previous year. These certainly, on investigation, will be found to have black-feathered faces like carrion crows, whereas the rooks which own the nests (and are occasionally shot there at rook-shooting time) invariably have the white featherless faces peculiar to the fully adult rook, and, I have no doubt myself, attain, if unharmed, a very considerable age. Be this as it may, the fact remains that the number of unpaired rooks belonging to each rookery is, in spring-time, vastly in excess of the number of nests therein, multiplied by two, for their owners. These last, by taking the exact number of nests, can always be accurately counted; and the total number of occupants of the rookery can be roughly but approximately estimated, when, in the calm of a fine evening in spring, the dusky birds perch for roost in the high elms. In my own opinion, and I have taken pains to form a tolerably correct one, the unpaired rooks at that time of the year are in the proportion of not less than ten to two of the paired ones. The Wilts shepherds call these black-faced young rooks "stag birds," and say of them, "they do not breed this season."

GROUSE HAWKING

TO succeed in taking grouse with a trained falcon late in the season, and especially in October or later, on an English moor, is no easy matter. The somewhat rough nature of the best of grouse-hawking land, and, late in the autumn, the prodigious speed and wildness of the grouse (particularly English grouse), which should be seen to be believed, are great obstacles to success. Still, they may be overcome, and triumphantly, by patience and the possession of really good trained peregrine falcons, kept well, and always in high condition. These should be wild-caught or passage hawks, either "red" (*i.e.* in the first year's plumage) or "haggard" (*i.e.* adult) falcons. I regret that I have been unable to procure gerfalcons and grouse hawking at the same time, and I have never heard of any of the three large Northern falcons, the Greenlander, the Iclander, and the Norway ger, having been trained or used for grouse. It is generally thought of these hawks that, resembling merlins rather than peregrines in their configuration and mode of flight, they cannot be made to "wait on" sufficiently well and long enough to succeed as grouse hawks. For a long time I did not share this belief myself, and I regret that now

I shall never be able to put the matter to the test of experience. I may, however, remark, that since writing these lines I have managed to procure no less than three Greenland gerfalcons and four or five Icelanders; and my belief in their suitability for game hawking has nearly left me, in consequence of the very small success I have attained with any one of these noble birds at these flights.

In 1886 the best grouse hawk I had was an old haggard falcon of considerable age, caught in a trap on the Wilts Downs. The only other falcon likely to be trained successfully to this fine flight is probably the Indian *shahin* or *shaheen* (*Falco peregrinator*); but the appearance in England of a living specimen of this bird is most uncommon—indeed, I only recollect having heard of two. One of them, a lovely female *shaheen*, was brought over some years ago by that accomplished falconer, Captain Stephen Biddulph, of the Bengal Lancers, and was flown by him on my moor. She had acquired a great reputation in India at other quarry, but we did not succeed in entering her to grouse. It was a quarry quite strange to her; and at the time she was flown she was placed at some disadvantage by being in moult, not having been used for some time, and then having to match herself against October grouse instead of those met with on the 12th of August. The best sport obtained with her in India was, I think, at wild ducks on the “jheels.” Comparing the peregrine with the *shaheen*, the latter is credited with the greater

speed and docility ; but her smaller size would, I think, handicap her against an old cock grouse in October travelling at his best pace down-wind, for he then requires a very hard blow to stop him. Indeed, as a rule, we do not find even peregrine tiercels then able to deliver it, however good they may have been at the beginning of the season.

In the practical absence of flights (save very occasional ones) at the heron, wild-duck, and woodcock, the red grouse (*Tetrao lagopus*) affords, in my opinion, the best flight now remaining to modern Falconry. A most sporting bird, endowed with great speed, strength, and endurance, fairly plentiful, and very wild, prized by all as an article of diet (and especially so by the peregrine), to be found on the open moor, and only there : what better quarry can a falconer desire ? His falcon wishes for no better. A grouse is entirely to her mind at all times, and she does her very best when flying at it. So long as grouse will lie to the point of a dog—in some parts of Scotland for a month in the season, in my own case, in Northumberland, not more than a very few days—all will go well. We use dogs to find them, setters being generally preferred, though one of my best dogs with hawks for several years was a pointer. Dogs used for this purpose must be made to range far and wide, and be very steady on point. I have known some to remain thus motionless fully half-an-hour, perhaps lying down at last, like a “dropper.” In my young days, dogs bred between pointer and setter frequently used to drop

on the point.¹ Knowing as I did each dog's actions well on game, I could usually distinguish, by the aid of glasses, the dog's point at game from one at the place where game had only lately been ; and when I know the dog well, always know a point at a hare from one at a grouse. Grouse leave a strong scent, except in the middle of the day.

The report as to the point being favourable, off goes the hood, and the hawk is cast off by the falconer, her jesses, of course, having been previously freed from the brass swivel and the leash removed. Moreover, it is no harm, but a proper proceeding, to twist up the thin dog's-skin jesses as tight as may be, to catch the less wind in their swift passage through the air. The bell remains on her leg, but it hums loudly in the course of a long stoop, and though it doubtless hinders her flight a little, it is indispensable in game hawking to enable the bird to be found in high heather. Let us call her for the nonce "Lady Jane Grey," my good old favourite passage falcon of eight years' service, the very highest mounter I have ever seen, to a pitch above us or the dogs in a breeze or in calm weather, by ringing up in wide circles with regular beatings of her wings. I have had many splendid high mounters amongst my hawks, but "Lady Jane" would sometimes rise so high, that she was not only beyond the reach of human sight, but even beyond the range of good field-glasses, soon to reappear on the

¹ Colonel Hamilton, in his "Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman" (1860), gives a portrait of a dog of this kind which he owned for shooting, and which was one of the best he had ever seen.

rising of the grouse or the tossing of my lure. The game being found by the dogs, we are able to flush it for the hawk whenever we please.

"Now, sir, now," says James Rutford, my falconer, always impatient, "she is high enough; plenty." "Do let her have it, Fisher," says some equally impatient friend. But I like to see a game hawk up high, and often keep them waiting. It is not well, however, to cause an impatient, or low-flying, or inexperienced hawk to wait long. They straggle off, and eventually get badly served, if at all. Not so "Lady Jane," who needed no lure. The standing dog is her lure, and before long, with a falconer's shout, James has at length gone up to the dog, and put up what grouse are before him.

The hawk to kill game is one that knows her business, knows the dog, and what his point means, and will not leave him. Let none think that grouse care much for a hawk over them, after a time or two. At first they certainly do lie the better for her presence on the wing, but later in the season they will not lie to the dog at all. We then, on reaching any likely place, cast off a steady hawk, so as to be ready for the grouse, which otherwise might rise a long way ahead of us.

Well, in either case the grouse have risen; one of them for the last time, for down comes "Lady Jane." Would that I could adequately describe that singular stoop of hers! It appears to begin by her throwing herself forward some yards, then over she turns, and, head foremost, flies down earthwards, moving her wings rapidly, with the greatest swiftness.

Let the grouse rise wild, let them even come unexpectedly over a hill and under the hawk, and she is round, and down, and into the flying pack with an ease that seems marvellous, even to men used to their approach towards the butts in "a down-wind drive." Her stoop generally brings her down a few feet behind her quarry, and occasionally, but not often, on it. More often she would be level with them almost too quickly for the eye to follow, and instantly on to the grouse she has chosen. 'Tis all over with the poor thing then—a cloud of feathers, the sound of a heavy blow (if you are near enough to hear it), and the grouse, possibly dead then, is hurled many a yard through the air and falls to the ground. On hard ground I have seen a grouse so struck down-wind rebound (in one case to the distance of eighteen yards) as they do when shot from the "butts" in a breeze.

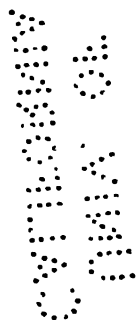
The blow is given by the falcon's strong and sharp hind-talon of each foot—usually as sharp as a needle, and driven at great speed by a bird weighing over 2 lbs. This blow is not to be despised. No hawk stooping from a very high pitch can readily clutch or grasp her prey: she rushes upwards, impelled by her momentum, like a ball from a trap, a couple of gunshots high, turns over, and is on the grouse directly. There she sits, and with two or three powerful bites the grouse is soon headless, the head or part of it being the hawk's reward after a kill. She could kill four such grouse in a day, if carefully managed; three are, however, quite enough, and she will be well fed on the last

RETURN FROM GROUSE-HAWKING

WILLIAM RUTFORD (*assist.-falconer*, with "Princess"), MAJOR C. H. FISHER (with "Lady Jane Grey"),
JAMES RUTFORD (*falconer*, with "Landy" falcon)



John, Jim, and Joe



old grouse we may have taken after her third successful, or indeed unsuccessful, flight.

As illustrating the force of a falcon's stoop, I may here mention an incident which occurred to me on the banks of the River Orrin when fishing. From some bracken I put up three greyhens (old birds, far larger and heavier than the red grouse). Down came a wild falcon from the sky at the middle bird. I saw and heard the blow. The greyhen staggered on, leaving the usual tribute of feathers behind her. Up rose the falcon in the grand and stately style so few trained hawks can ever adopt or regain (so much do they lose by captivity), over and down she came, and down fell the quarry as dead as though struck by a bullet. Down, too, went my long rod, and off went I. My distant shout sent this falcon off her prey and away; unlike "Lady Jane," who was ever well pleased to see us come up to her on the ground, approved highly of shouting, and would at any moment leave a grouse, and jump to the fist for a bit of meat, and often for none at all, so tame and confident was she. She was in her fifth season when at her best for grouse, but had done wonders at rooks in Wiltshire when in her first two seasons. I have twice seen her strike a rook in the middle of a flock pretty high up apparently stone dead, recover herself, turn and fly down after it, and so rapidly that she had it in her foot a short distance from the ground. She was a passage hawk, and I have never seen an eyess do the like. On this occasion I took possession, somewhat meanly I trow, of the wild hawk's prey. On examining the effect of her two

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blows, I found that three ribs on one side were clean cut through and separated from the backbone as by a chop with a heavy knife and strong hand, and one talon had entered and split the base of the skull, from which the brains were protruding.

Later on in the season, when grouse are wild and strong and fine birds, say, in October, the sport is at its best. We then make an extended line of five or six men abreast and sixty yards or so apart, the falconer with the hawk being usually in the centre. Just before the line starts in silence, he casts her off, and directly she is well aloft, a whistle or a wave of the hand and we all move on. A dog ranges wide, but is not much attended to, for, the birds being wild, he seldom gets much chance to point. Now is the time to see the grouse fly. Rising wild, and good at either cutting through a head wind, with driving wings and close compact body, or careering down it, their pace is terrific. A Yorkshire keeper, seeing for the first time a hooded hawk, laughed to scorn the idea of her catching a grouse. "She canna speed the buds," quoth he; though she soon undeceived him as to this. Grouse were sure to be found sooner or later, for, though often packed, I always had plenty on Riddlehamhope fells.

The stoop comes from a high altitude generally, and much more time having been afforded her than is given when the dog points, the falcon should either slay the grouse or "put it in" hard—in which case it is easily found by the dog, and put up for her again. Unlike the use of the gun, the hawk

kills but one bird at one time, and hardly ever wounds it.

Every creature I know, and I believe every insect, has some peculiar way (*i.e.* peculiar to its tribe) of escaping from its enemies. Grouse, at all events, possess plenty of brains in their small heads, and towards the end of the season shift in air from the stoop by means of a singular spring or shoot upwards a very few inches before the hawk's talons can touch them. Very much surprised she seems at this manœuvre. The usual method of the grouse to escape, however, is to stop short in the most rapid flight and hurl themselves straight into the nearest heather or bracken. This should be seen to be believed. The very first time I ever saw it performed was so long ago as 1860, I think, when I happened to be the guest of the Rev. Gage Earl Freeman ("Peregrine" of *The Field*), on his Cheshire moor. The falcon employed was his celebrated eyess grouse hawk "Islay," so named in allusion to her Argyllshire birthplace. The hawk had vanished in pursuit of an old cock grouse, and, not returning, I set off to seek her. Presently from off a far hill came a grouse, making straight for me, with the falcon in full pursuit; she came up to it rapidly, got well over it, and stooped finely, just above a big, dry, and stony burn; the grouse, at tiptop speed, stopped short as the stoop came close and hurled itself straight down into the mass of loose pebbles.

"Well, he has done it now," methought, "a clear case of suicide! I'll pick up the little that can be left of him." I marked the very spot. No grouse

there, no blood, and not a feather to be seen—not one—No! but to my astonishment up jumped a grouse, well and strong, from the stones at my feet. Down came the disappointed but now rejoicing falcon, and “put it in” some distance off, near a rick of rushes. I put it out again, and between us it was caught, on the last day of grouse hawking moreover. I had this grouse’s head mounted on a penwiper, and gave it to Mr. Freeman as a memorial of one of his best hawks.

In October, grouse have yet another mode of escaping the stoop of any but the best of hawks in good condition and wind. They throw themselves *up* instead of *down*, like a ball from a boy’s trap, a couple of feet high, and the falcon, then all but touching them, cannot stop, and has to pass under them to her evident astonishment. I have rarely seen one caught near covert after this really surprising manœuvre, which should be seen to be believed. I may add that on my moor the grouse developed a strange habit of flying into the plantations of fir trees, just like blackgame, and unlike the usual habit of *Tetrao lagopus*.

My eyess falcon “Lundy,” in 1885, killed 70 partridges and many “sundries”; in 1887, 54 grouse; and in 1889, 64 grouse and a teal. A passage falcon, “Lady Jane,” in 1887, took 44 grouse, and in 1888, 38 grouse; the other hawks, in those two years, making up a total of 111 grouse and a snipe and 149 grouse and a partridge respectively.

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FLIGHTS AT THE BLACK GROUSE
AND WILD DUCK

IN 1866 I spent the autumn most agreeably with a friend on a moor called Drumnasallie, near Loch Eil, in Argyllshire, for the purpose of enjoying the usual Highland sport. I was, however, mainly intent on hawking grouse, though I found the country far too hilly for that sport. To make up for this, we had a stretch of it eleven miles long by five wide, and some of the smaller straths were fairly flat. I possessed at that time a very superior eyess peregrine falcon. She had been well hacked that year for me by the well-known Scottish falconer Peter Ballantine, who was in the service of Mr. Robert Ewen, of Ewenfield, Ayrshire. This veteran was of opinion that hawks differ greatly *inter se* as well as in their adaptability for falconers' use, and did not agree with those who think it is otherwise if they are healthy, well fed, well hacked, trained, and worked. He used to point to the conspicuous abilities and goodness of two eyess tiercels, called "Band of Hope" and "Rantin' Robin," whose performances at partridge I have seldom seen equalled anywhere, and said that they came from a certain inland eyrie, very difficult indeed to reach. He added that he had

never had a bad hawk from this rock in many years' experience of it, and that there were never more than two, and often but one young bird in the nest. On the occasion now in question there was but one. This was a falcon, and a very large one; so large that Peter Ballantine (whose quarry was almost exclusively the partridge, and whose Ayrshire partridges were always very late) reluctantly deemed her—as truly she was—rather unsuited for that flight, and let me have her. I believe the old falconer chose to attribute this paucity of young to the age of the two parent falcons; as, I believe, do also the Indian hawk-keepers, who further assert that such young have bright yellow feet when immature, a colour only met with usually in the feet of an adult falcon. Be this as it may, I called my bonny young hawk "Bluefoot," for her feet were of that unusual colour, and quite as distinctly blue as those of a young saker or an Iceland falcon. This peculiarity is certainly of rare occurrence in the peregrine, and I have only met with two examples of it in all my lengthened experience of these falcons. The second occurred in a fine young female peregrine, which, for aught I know, might have come from "Bluefoot's" eyrie, which Ballantine sometimes was unable to get at.

"Bluefoot" had evidently preyed much for herself when "at hack," being constantly an absentee from the hacking-place, and only getting into the sweep of old Peter's bow-net on a chance and unexpected return. She took, as was to be expected, some extra time and trouble to break to the

hood, and train, and was only just ready for the 12th of August. Luckily we had few, if any, squeakers that year. Seeing that she was very big, and squeakers are very small, I introduced her to grouse as soon as I could; and as this fine game bird is usually a favourite with the peregrine, she took them readily, mounted well, and, being a fine footer for an eyess (a point in which eyesses naturally must be much less proficient than passage hawks), as well as unusually fast, I had great hopes of her. I soon, however, discovered that she knew too much, and doubtless from her previous experiences during her period of "hack" she had found out that she could easily procure her own living without the aid of her owner or his lure. Her courage was great, so off she constantly went "at check"—when she should have been patiently "waiting on" for grouse—at rooks, hooded crows, seagulls from Loch Eil, and especially at passing blackgame.

Eyess peregrines do not usually take well to blackgame; and, indeed, I have only taken three old blackcocks with such trained hawks, their size and strength, added to great speed when fully moulted, and, I believe more than anything, the distastefulness of their flesh to the peregrine, militating against it. "Bluefoot" had no such prejudices, and never failed to do her very best at blackgame, old or young. I had great sport with her at this quarry, of which there was a good supply on the moor.

As she pursued them on sight *at* any distance

and to any distance (and these birds, though big, fly far faster than is supposed when adult), I frequently had, in falconers' language, "to leave her out"—*i.e.* out at night, from not finding her before night at all, or only with a full crop, and for the time irrecoverable. In short, after a good deal of this, I gave up hopes of making her into a steady game hawk, and turned to my other falcons, only flying "Bluefoot" at odd times, as she latterly would not come in, or even come down to the lure from her stately pitch, being bent on killing for herself and adopting the manners of the wild hawk. I got into the habit of putting her loose for the last flight in the strath near our lodge at the head of Loch Eil, and she usually rewarded our confidence by towering to a great height, and so commanding a great stretch of country around.

The blackgame every evening used to cross the valley from side to side in numbers; the hooded crows were always seeking what they could devour; wild ducks came down to some of our flooded oatfields from distant Loch Sheil; herons were almost plentiful on the loch shore; and I kept some fine blue-rock pigeons near our house, and could always drive some of them out. Nothing ever came amiss to "Bluefoot"; so if we did not provide her with a flight she almost always managed to find, not one, but many, for herself whenever she was put on the wing. A hawk of this disposition is with difficulty made "to stoop to the swung lure"; nor do I think that that form of exercise is suited to the training of game hawks,

since it tends to lower their pitch instead of leaving them to mount to a good height, so essential in game hawking. In the case of "Bluefoot," all this ended, of course, in her being repeatedly "lost," or rather, I should prefer to say, "left out for the night," for she early made choice of some suitable rocks close to the house, and roosted there, dry and sheltered from wind and rain. She was nearly always to be seen (or her bells heard) there towards night, no matter how far off she was supposed to have killed. I am, indeed, convinced myself that she often did come, so to speak, "home to roost" from several miles of distance, her favourite prey, the blackgame, taking her away out of sight of all glasses. In this she again adopted a very common habit of the wild peregrine, whom she resembled more than any eyess falcon I have ever been acquainted with. Time went on, and, after disappearing for the day, it was so usual with us to go out in early morning to "'Bluefoot's' Rocks," and to find and take her up, when she had "cast" and was hungry, for with me she was always fairly tame, that she was indulged with great liberty up to October, and acquired great powers of flying and footing. Needless to say, her absences from Drumnasallie and the rocks of her choice were more and more prolonged, but as our moor and that of our friends covered the country for many and many a mile, and guns (save ours) were unknown, she escaped all harm, and afforded me the sight of many a splendid flight when out with the other hawks. Sometimes we took her up and brought

her home ; sometimes we did not. I believe she latterly lived very much on the blackgame, for, although she engaged with many a heron, I do not know that she ever killed one, and probably she never really tried to do so. The flight at such a strong and dangerous bird, whose nauseous flesh no hawk would willingly eat twice, is, of course, entirely an artificial one, and only a very few out of a score of trained falcons, passengers or eyesses, are found adapted to it.

Thus it came to pass, towards the end of September, that "Bluefoot" could not be found at morn on her favourite rock, was very rarely seen on the moor, and latterly not seen at all for no less than seventeen consecutive days. We were, however, always provided, when out hawking or shooting, with the means of retaking her. One misty day, going out with the gun to kill a few grouse for the larder, my then falconer, Jamie Barr, spied a hawk in the air. Out came the pigeon from the net of the game-bag, and down came the truant "Bluefoot," slightly wild, of course, but she let me take her up (in some deep heather) without snaring, and so came home with us.

At Drumnasallie, several miles of our ground consisted of a long, narrow swamp or moss lying between two small rivers, both emptying themselves into our end (the top) of Loch Eil, but of very different appearance and character. The one proceeded from a granite range of mountains, I think, in the direction of distant Achnacarry, the home of Loch Eil, the other from the large and well-

known fresh-water Loch Shiel. The water of the first was as clear as crystal, that of the other of a uniform peaty hue at all times, from the swampy moss through which its course lay. Its banks were all thickly planted or studded with the rowan tree or mountain ash. In these trees, adorned with their lovely scarlet berries, I have seen far more blackgame sitting and feasting than I shall dare to specify here, for fear of not being believed, this splendid bird of game having, alas! become scarcer of late all over Scotland, I know not why. These blackgame were "Bluefoot's" favourite quarry, and a great attraction. She pursued them with zest on sight, and specially when left out loose, as she so often was; whilst two other of my hawks, though fond of the red grouse, would neither notice blackgame when alive nor eat them when dead. This dark river and its companion swamp was also frequented by wild ducks, coming from Loch Shiel down to our end of Loch Eil very frequently. At that time, also, we had two very large fields of standing oats not far from the house and close to the river, that could not be cut or gathered in consequence of a flood.

I need not say that our ancestors' favourite flight for their long-winged hawks (for only few and great men kept gerfalcons for the kite and hern) was that which, under these circumstances, I would fain have made mine, viz., the common wild duck. They called it "hawking at the 'brook' or river." Peregrine falcons, called by them variously "falcons gentle," or, as by Simon Latham, "the brave and

stately haggard," were in use almost entirely in England for this flight; and, eyesses not being much esteemed for it, wild-caught hawks were mostly employed. So it befell that one September morning the gillies sent in word that three wild ducks had come down to a little splash of water not far from the house, and close to a little green mound from which I used to exercise the hawks to the lure. It did not take me long to run into the hawk-house and call up the falconer, Jamie Barr. Then I took "Bluefoot" from her block, hooded her up, and went off to the gillies and their ducks. I had no doubt but that she would fly a duck on sight, as she must have met with many, and probably killed and eaten one or two when flying loose "at hack." On gaining the mound, I soon caught sight of the ducks at a considerable distance, which I at once endeavoured to lessen by the best stalk I could make. The curiosity of the men would not be restrained, and they soon took my place on the mound, though told not to do so, and, intent on getting as near to the ducks as I could, I did not notice them there. The proposed quarry soon took wing, and "Bluefoot" was as quickly unhooded and cast off. Most unluckily, however, from having been so accustomed to be "called" from a distance to the top of this mound, and seeing the falconer on it, she instantly turned round, without looking at the ducks, and went straight back there! The ducks flew equally straight up the river, on their way to their distant home, the fresh-water Loch Shiel. In despair, as the hawk continued to

circle round the men expecting the lure, I attracted her attention by producing mine. Always a very eager falcon, back she came at once to me. No lure did she get, but her sharp eyes instantly detected the three ducks just vanishing round a turn of the river nearly a quarter of a mile away, that I had fondly hoped would have been reached by her within a couple of hundred yards from her start. Her wings soon altered their shape in the air as she got off at her best pace. Such fine fliers as wild ducks, when once well on the wing, are no mean quarry, and as these had so long a start I hardly expected to see the hawk again that day; and I knew that, if she did not kill one of the ducks, she would find and kill something else for herself; in which case we should not see her near Drumnasallie before nightfall, or the following morning.

. As a falconer should, however (for hawks unsuccessful at a distance frequently return to the place they were loosed from), I remained on the before-mentioned little green hill with the men, searching with our glasses for any sight of "Bluefoot" or the ducks for a considerable time. I was about to leave the place, when I once more scanned the long, straight reach of the stream to the turn where I had seen them last, and, to my delight, the glass revealed three tiny, dark specks coming down the centre of the stream, and flying close to the water, much as the two ducks and a mallard had previously gone up it. We soon made them out to be ducks, and, as they came into fuller view, there also was the falcon, which we had last seen many hundreds

of yards behind them, now only some fifty in their rear. On and on they all four rapidly came, following the course of the stream, a lovely sight for a falconer's eyes, and the falcon gaining rapidly. As the stream made a bend round the little hill on which we stood, the hard-pressed ducks took a short cut for the sea-loch of Loch Eil, and passed directly over our heads, and not twenty yards above us. All three of the ducks had their mouths opened fully wide, and odd enough they looked, and, when the falcon passed, she was so near that I could see her lovely black eyes grimly intent on her fleeting quarry. Of course, I rather looked at her beak, and, to my horror, hers too was also slightly open—such demands on the lungs does a long chase, at best speed, make on the pursuer as well as on the pursued.

Though tired, like the ducks, "Bluefoot" was true to the habit of her race in like case. Up and up she went for a stoop, but, to my thinking, not nearly high enough, for there was no wind, and nothing to help her, and the sea-loch lay glittering in the sun not 100 yards away. Over she turned, and came round and down, and stooped at the mallard well, but not quite well enough, for he just "put her out" by a lucky shift in the air, and she was instantly many yards below him. This manœuvre, however, saved his life, and gave him the second he required to shut up his wings in safety and drop like a stone into the broader water, leaving a good many feathers in the air—mementoes of his narrow escape. The two ducks and he made almost simultaneous splashes

as they disappeared into the water of the river's mouth. What became of them I never knew, for there were no weeds—not a trace of one ; no bushes nor overhanging banks ; and the clear water flowed over rough bare stones alone in that place. We were soon at the very spot, and, though gun and a retriever were very soon brought out, our united and careful search discovered no trace of the fugitives anywhere. The gillies declared that they must have voluntarily drowned themselves by holding on below in the water. But as there was nothing there for them to hold on by, this was not a very probable conjecture. As I had fully hoped to have found one at least of the ducks, by the aid of the dog, and “put it out” for the hawk, I did not try to take her down, and, in fact, some short time elapsed before I thought of looking for her. One of the gillies then said that he had seen her set off in pursuit of a flock of tame blue-rock pigeons, which were accustomed to fly round the house, and which, as it happened, had “taken the air,” probably from fear of the hawk.

We all looked up, and could see the dark cluster-like specks against a clear blue sky, mounting as rapidly as they could in the short spiral rings adopted by pigeons in an upward hurried escape flight like theirs. The falcon was in hot pursuit of them, and was employing the same means of reaching them, only mounting, and that speedily, in vastly wider rings, the whole affording a fine aërial performance none too often seen. Peregrines excel in this manner, and so did “Bluefoot,” for presently she had

"gained the sky" of them, and down she stooped in proper form, passing right through the lot of terrified pigeons after the one she had selected. Hawk and pigeons hurried down with incredible velocity, falling at first like dots the size of shot, and finally like stones, and with a loud rushing sound. One moment more, and the pigeons had hurled themselves into the shelter of some small larches. One, of course, was cut out from the rest by the close stoop of the falcon, but just gained shelter in the trees. This did not improve "Blue-foot's" temper, and, still full of flying, and more like a wild hawk than an eyess, up and up again she went in wide rings, as though she had but just been unhooded. My servant said, "She has taken to the soar, and is off; we shall not see her again just yet." I did not think so. Hawks on the soar, from whatever cause, are always, as the Dutch falconers call it, "at play"; they are not at work, and are but enjoying their wings and rising lazily, usually in warm, bright, and stilly weather. Now I saw a difference in the stroke of my hawk's wings to this. My glass showed me her head moving from side to side, and I felt sure she was really looking out for prey. Moreover, this country swarmed, in those days, with blackgame, and some were passing all day long from our woods and hills across the river valley to our neighbours', and *vice versa*.

I was still watching the small dark speck that now represented "Bluefoot" in the clear sky with my field-glasses, when one of the gillies called out, "Here they come;" and sure enough there came

ON THE MOOR AT RIDDLEHAMHOPE

MRS. GEORGE SIMONDS, GEORGE SIMONDS, ARTHUR NEWALL, MRS. NEWALL,
MAJOR C. H. FISHER, JAMES RUTFORD (*falconer*)

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John J. Newman, 1914



a lot of blackgame, headed by an old blackcock, easily distinguished by his size and colour, passing rapidly and very high in air, apparently from our neighbour's lofty hill opposite to us. This finally brought them right under the hawk. Though they must have seen her, methinks, they appeared to disregard her, and held on at a really splendid pace towards our vast and distant wood of Drumnasallie. Blackgame are probably not quite so fast as grouse (though even of this I am not sure, for I have seen them now and then in the middle of a big pack of grouse coming on to the "butts" from a long drive, and quite holding their own). They certainly do fly fast when high in air, and they have been flying for some time, their great weight doubtless assisting them. Presently they were well within the hawk's range, and soon were right under her. As they passed, she shot upward and forward, as a falcon should, turned over, and stooped in magnificent style through the calm, warm air. This time she stooped to some purpose, for she struck the leading blackcock apparently dead in the air. I distinctly saw the cloud of feathers left floating behind him, and it seemed quite a long time before he fell, and that so violently, upon the hard ground beneath, that his body rebounded two or three feet into the air, and lay motionless. A fine flying falcon, after making a direct stoop from an elevation which cannot be less than a quarter of a mile, and is sometimes more than double that height I am convinced, usually shoots directly and straightly upwards, away from the bird she has struck, like

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a ball out of a boy's trap, being probably hardly able to stop herself, and thence is soon down and on her quarry. So it befell with "Bluefoot," and she was not long in taking possession of her game. The river lay between us, the bridge was afar off. She had richly deserved a reward, so we did not hurry. Eventually she was carried home with her game (not then very fit for our larder, but very suitable for hawks' meat), and safely replaced on her perch in the hawk-house. I had the old blackcock weighed, and even then he scaled over $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. in weight.

I am sorry to add that on my return south I lost this fine falcon in Ayrshire, while in pursuit of another old blackcock, close to where she was brought up "at hack," and though long and well sought, she was never more heard of, most likely having fallen a victim to the gun, as most lost hawks, from their tameness, eventually do.

PARTRIDGE HAWKING

PARTRIDGE hawking has been so often and so well described by falconers—notably by my old friend, J. E. Harting, in the second edition of his excellent “Hints on the Management of Hawks”—that I need not here treat of it in detail. All who know the bird well must admit that the partridge is a plucky and game little bird, although as quarry for the falconer not to be compared with the grouse.

On the edge of my moor at Riddlehamhope, in Northumberland, I had usually a few coveys, smaller and darker birds than we are accustomed to see in the South. They seemed to be attracted by the seeds of a small rush on which they fed, for arable and cultivated land there was none. We never killed many, for they were not numerous, but generally had a few flights in September when going on to the moor for grouse.

For many years I used to fly my hawks at partridges on the open down land of Wiltshire, using good dogs, and fortunately possessing at that time two of the best hawks for the purpose—eyess tiercels “hacked” at home. It is, of course, indispensable to own, or rent, a sufficient extent of suitable ground, well stocked with partridges and

the right to preserve them upon it: 2000 or 3000 acres are quite necessary, if not more, for good and successful sport. The rooted idea that "hawking drives birds off the land," although quite erroneous, is everywhere prevalent, and, of course, militates seriously against the renting of grouse or partridge ground for falconry purposes. Suffice it to say that, although it is a perfectly incorrect idea, from a common-sense point of view and from the testimony of fact, it is in vain to try and convince those who will not be convinced on the point. The constant presence of two or more wild peregrines on my own and my neighbours' land, not only never drove our Wiltshire partridges away, but was never supposed to do so; although two or three naturally inferior tame hawks (not to be compared with the wild ones in their ability to take partridges) were believed by our neighbours to drive all the game off the manor. Luckily it did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, it was our neighbours' lands that were bare, from being much shot over, whilst ours, being kept quiet from the report of the gun, proved a land of plenty (for partridges) to our great content. One of my eyess falcons (flown in her turn only) killed 86 partridges there in one short season, and a tiercel took nearly 400 in the course of five years.

Every single flight, even at partridges, throughout the day, differs from those which precede and follow it, and hence its charm. The two best days I can remember—and these were in October—yielded 12 partridges in one day, and 14 in the next.

A remarkable flight once occurred with "Lundy," the favourite tiercel above referred to, who, in five years of service, took close upon 400 partridges, besides two kestrels and many other birds. This little hawk had done enough one day, when a neighbour's keeper came up and asked to see a flight. "Too late," said I—the other hawks having been "fed up," and he having killed three birds. Just then the dog employed, an untiring worker and finder, came to a dead point in some high clover close at hand. Quite forgetting what I had said, I at once unhooded "Lundy" and cast him off; but, to my horror, with his swivel in his jesses, and the leash, a yard and a quarter long, with button attached, dangling down from it. Few hawks, I hope, have ever been asked to take partridges thus encumbered. But it seemed to make little difference to this clever bird. Up he went in wide rings, apparently as fast as ever, despite the ridiculous appendages he carried aloft, and, when high enough, the partridges being moved, he stooped and killed one (to the keeper's gratification) with little ado.

Partridges can, of course, be taken by trained hawks on very enclosed and hedged lands, but it requires good dogs, men, and legs to do it. I used to say, *à propos* of the supposed need of fine open unenclosed arable land like the Wilts and Berks downs for partridge hawking, that with my falcon, my pointer "Fan," and my servant James, I would back myself to kill a partridge from a point in a four-acre field—unless it was unusually fenced and ditched.

I used to observe her narrowly, and, though often hidden in her coming down by trees and hedges, I almost always saw her shoot upwards from her stoop, which told me she had put her bird into a near fence, and had usually a good opportunity of marking the spot sufficiently by a tree. Her habit then was to turn round directly and come straight back to me, flying (as James said) "like a duck." Back she was with me, overhead, and "Fan" was soon to be seen, steady on her point, my man going one side of the fence and I the other. "Where am I, James; opposite the 'dog?'" "No, sir, ten feet lower down." "Look out," and in I jumped; the partridge fluttered out, and the falcon stooped. "Got it now?" "No, sir." "In by the ash at the end, under 'Fan'?" "Down by there, sir." "Ready?" "Yes." "Put it out." And out it came, and this time, poor bird, the hawk again stooped and trussed it. I have taken many pheasants in this way, but the style does not commend itself to all.

One fine October morning I was out alone, my servant and dog having gone off in search of a hawk we had just lost. We had had a little discussion, for I had conceived that the hawk had gone one way, and my man opined that she had gone another. We therefore separated; and I took on my glove the above-named tiercel, "Lundy." Being without a dog, I had to find the partridges myself before I could get a flight at them. I was, however, on an excellent manor, with plenty of time to spare, and plenty of birds before me. The difficulty was not to find birds unexpectedly; but, being

unprovided with a dog on that open ground, to mark them down in such a spot as that I could reasonably expect to flush them when I desired. To a reader who is a falconer I need not say that under such circumstances the nearest and most likely "roots" were first tried; and before long my efforts were successful, for I saw a covey rise and settle again, about a quarter of a mile away, on a great stubble-field of some fifty acres. Having made a tolerably satisfactory approach, I at once put the little hawk on the wing. None knew better than he what he was expected to do, and what he doubtless remembered to have performed scores and scores of times previously; for I venture to credit him, and all other birds and beasts accustomed to the society of man, with much greater mental powers than they are generally believed to possess.

Gaily he rose; round and round he "ringed" in ever-widening circles; and, as I advanced straight towards the spot where the partridges had settled, I had a falconer's pleasure in seeing the bird which a few short minutes previously had been borne on my hand, now at a great height above me, and evidently with no intention of leaving me. In fact, like others of his race when at their best, he evidently delighted in his performance, and knew precisely all the conditions of it.

To make a long story short, I had marked the birds well, and put them up right under the little hawk. Round he turned, and down he came with that peculiar and brilliant stoop known to and

loved by falconers of every age and of every clime ; falling like a stone into the flying covey, and hurling one of the birds to the ground ; from which, however, he soon got up, apparently but little the worse. On this occasion, however, I think the partridge practised the very singular but common feat of stopping short in the air and falling to the ground as though dead, in order to escape the hawk's stoop. This surprising feat, already referred to in the chapter on grouse hawking, seemed now to be wholly successful, though I have seen this same tiercel strike two birds dead in the air one after the other, out of the same covey, with seemingly little exertion. In this case the partridge, having executed this wonderful manœuvre, found himself, not only on *terra firma*, but on the very short stubble of the same field from which he had risen. He was far too knowing to trust himself again on the wing ; and the hawk had no alternative but to take him on the ground, which he speedily attempted to do. Here, however, he miscalculated his powers. Once on the ground, the partridge was far more agile than he, running this way and that with great speed. The hawk's only hope of success was in jumping up awkwardly and darting after the scudding partridge, who, just at the right moment, jumped from the ground and over his back, descended on the other side, and instantly commenced running harder than before. Time after time this was done, and presently the hawk determined to "have it out" on the ground. But at every attempt the partridge met him with outstretched neck and

raised hackles, in the attitude of a fighting bantam cock, jumping up to avoid being clutched every time the hawk struck at him; in fact, his whole action was that of a plucky little game bantam. This went on for some time, until, I regret to say (as I have always since regretted), I ended the unequal strife by putting the partridge once more fairly on the wing, when, of course, the hawk readily overtook and captured it, a circumstance not over much to his credit, and still less to mine.

Grouse constantly practise this stratagem of a feigned fall—unhurt; but the cunning old cocks, as *rusé* and hard as bird can be, have yet another device which nearly always succeeds with all but the very best of passage hawks, and then only on very open ground. It consists of urging their extremely rapid flight (which I have accurately timed myself on a measured distance to equal sixty miles an hour)¹ till the hawk's long stoop has brought her up to them—or, in a stern chase, her slightly superior speed has gradually done the same—till the two birds seem to touch, when suddenly (I hardly know how) the grouse springs perfectly straight up in the air for several feet, and instantly pursues its flight to the nearest covert. Its pursuer has no alternative but to do the same, passing through the vacant air in vain, quite surprised and outwitted; and seldom or never gets another good chance at a quarry possessed of such speed and cunning, and on its "native heath."

¹ See "Hints on the Management of Hawks," 2nd ed., p. 202.

FLIGHTS AT THE PEEWIT

NEVER but once have I been able to take with a trained hawk a perfectly wild peewit. In past years I often attempted this flight, and talked of its possibility with the well-known professional falconers, the brothers Robert and John Barr, when engaged with them in early spring rook-hawking on the Wiltshire Downs. And what falconer could refrain from wishing to make some use, as a quarry for trained hawks, of a bird so common, so little esteemed, and an inhabitant, moreover, of the open, unfenced, and almost treeless downs, which offer such excellent chances for a flight. John Barr, the elder of the two brothers, professed to have tried his hand at this flight in England and Ireland. He believed in its possibility, and used to relate to me many tales concerning it. I well remember one of his stories of this flight, in which the hawk employed was a wild-caught young passage tiercel of unusual size and excellence. Barr said that he had made and entered this hawk to peewits from the first, never suffering him to look at any other quarry or lure; and as he was then staying near the Curragh of Kildare, the Irish plover-catchers furnished him with as many freshly-caught peewits as he required. He further said that, on one of the

many occasions on which this specially-trained tiercel had tried his very best at this difficult quarry, he had stuck so closely to a wild peewit at which he had been hooded off, and by his splendid flying and stooping had so far tired him out that, although the peewit had mounted very high, the little hawk, to the falconer's intense delight, was for once obviously getting the better of him. Indeed, he was rapidly forcing him down again to earth, and had every prospect of soon catching him. Just then, however, a large flock of peewits appeared upon the scene, and, true to their natural instinct of curiosity, approached and passed below the hawk and the hunted peewit, with, alas! the instant effect of inducing the luckless tiercel to transfer his attentions to one of them. The inevitable result, of course, was that he lost his fine chance at an almost beaten peewit by thus promptly engaging with a fresh one. John Barr also told me that he had often flown a cast of good passage tiercels together at peewits; but he had to admit that even with hawks such as these (which were, I take it, in good wind and condition) he had never quite succeeded in fairly taking a strong wild peewit. I was sorry to hear of this, for, of course, the use of two good, well-trained passage tiercels, accustomed to flying together and helping one another, must naturally present the most likely way of attaining success in this flight to any one who has seen them fly, and I then possessed just such a cast of tiercels.

I have myself done my best at this quarry, using both passage and eyess tiercels, singly and together,

but with no better ultimate success than John Barr, nor do I know of any falconer who has. I admit the great difficulty, but I still believe, as John Barr always did believe, that the thing can be done, and could I but have my time over again I would again undertake the adventure. The difficulties are great, but not, as I believe, altogether insurmountable. They are well known to all falconers, who by common consent "give the peewit up." To mention a few of them, there is, firstly, the fact of a hawk being in a semi-captive state, and deprived of liberty and constant daily flying, condemned by day to sit constantly hooded on a block, and by night unhooded on a pole, breathing very moderate air instead of the pure breezes of heaven, and eating unearned food very little to its own taste. Under these conditions a hawk must be severely handicapped when matched against the wild, free peewit of the air. This bird is more on the wing, perhaps, than almost any English wild bird, excepting, perhaps, the swifts and swallows, and the male, during the period of incubation, is ceaseless in his noisy notice of any man, bird, or beast that approaches too closely his curious nest on the ground, and the three or four coveted eggs which it contains. Certes, if practice could make a bird fly and give him wind, our crested friend should fly as, alas! the falconer finds that he really can and does. Secondly, I think that the peregrine, naturally, is not overfond of the peewit's dark flesh as a *bonne bouche*; she prefers the pigeon, wild or tame—apparently her favourite food—and the partridge during her

usual term of residence on the English downs (which may roughly be deemed to begin in November and end in April). Neither of these two birds costs her anything like the same exertion to capture that the chase of the peewit entails. Thirdly, the falconer must use and must accustom every hawk he uses to the lure, and a lure, look you, more or less garnished with food, or holding out the promise of food. John Barr told me that he invariably exercised the hawks intended for this flight at bagged peewits, of which he could obtain a supply from the plover-catchers on the Curragh; but that so good were even these netted birds that, although he fed his hawks on nothing else, he never could succeed in taking at noon one of the plover-catcher's birds that had been caught that morning. After a long, twisting, and high flight they invariably beat his hawks off, if given the fair "law" that, I am happy to add, most falconers allow to such "trains." At the time when John Barr was thus endeavouring to take wild peewits, there was to be seen, said he, on the Curragh, a little, shabby-looking, wild tiercel, which had lost one, or two (certainly one), of his longest wing feathers, and thus showed a gap on one side. He was still wearing one solitary jess, in token that he, too, had at one time been a falconer's bird. Now this hawk, in the cleverest way, regularly obtained his daily dinner by catching one of these same wild peewits, with more or less ease, *faute de mieux*, probably, for rooks would hardly suit a wild tiercel's taste, and little else in the bird way, save the wild peewits, fre-

quented the open Curragh. On hearing this story, it naturally occurred to me that this wild tiercel knew well enough that, if he did not succeed in catching his dinner or supper for himself, no one else was likely to give it to him; whilst long experience had convinced our trained hawks that, when the flight at a peewit became downright hard work for them, they had nothing to do but to give up the attempt, and to come down to the lure and their food, which, for fear of otherwise losing them, it was then necessary to show them.

In support of the contention that trained hawks are not able to take the wild peewit (or, let us say, the long-billed curlew, another much-coveted quarry of the falconer), I have often heard it said by the late Edward Clough Newcome, a past master in falconry, that in his opinion the powers of the worst wild peregrine far exceeded those of the best trained hawk of the same species, and this mainly from the constant daily work of the wild bird, of which its tamed relative was as constantly deprived. The hawks kept and trained by the late William Barr (the father of Robert and John), who was taught by that celebrated Scottish falconer, John Anderson, were kept by him very much at liberty round his house in Dumbartonshire. He was gamekeeper at Luss long ago. They were brought and exhibited publicly at racecourses and other open spaces, and were seen by Mr. Clough Newcome, who said of them that "whatever else they could not do, fly they could."

But to return to John Barr and his wild peewit

hawking. In this he has often told me, and I think to his credit, that he never fairly succeeded. I stuck to the attempt myself stubbornly in Wiltshire for some time, procuring live peewits from Ireland, and from Leadenhall Market. Like Barr I used both a cast of passage tiercels and a cast of eyess tiercels, or a cast of one of each, flying together, yet I did not succeed, save very late in the season at exhausted or crippled birds. The only strong wild peewit I did catch fairly by foot of hawk was a fine male in nuptial plumage, and early in the season. His capture was, of course, "a fluke," and solely owing to a lucky stoop. Oddly enough, the hawk was not a tiercel but a falcon, an excellent eyess peregrine of Irish extraction; "hacked," and lost from hack, and regained, and given to me by that generous old Irish falconer, Mr. Corbet. This falcon was returning to me, high in air, after having "put in" a travelling rook, at which she had been daringly slipped, and which it would have taken a real good passage hawk to have stopped before reaching covert. I advanced to meet her, and my horse put up a peewit from off the down. Round came the falcon, over and down, and with a "back cut," so seldom practised by the inferior eyess, she struck the poor peewit dead on the turf before he had time for any crafty flying.

If the wild peewit can thus defy the trained hawk, the number of skeletons and remains of peewits, all unmistakably killed and partly eaten by wild peregrines on the downs in the spring, proves that they at least have but little difficulty with this

shifty plover. The wild peregrine is seldom for long a stranger on any large open downland in England, leaving in the spring for incubation (mostly to mountainous tracts, or the higher sea cliffs tenanted by various breeding sea-fowl), and returning with her mate to the same tract of country early in November after having reared and trained her young, and left them to their own resources. I have watched her engaged in this curious process with delight, and I have seen the two old peregrines in company with young ones much later than I think it is usually supposed that they keep together. Peregrines are very jealous of the intrusion of another hawk of this species on any part of the wide domain of air which they occupy year after year, and which they seem to consider their own. The shepherds of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Downs, who, like all shepherds of my acquaintance, are observant and understanding men, are far more conversant, after their own fashion, with the natural history of these downs than is commonly supposed. They well know this, and from constantly seeing the big blue hawks near Stonehenge (for instance), near such and such a cliff, and such and such a down (for all of them have their own names, of untold antiquity), the shepherds call the hawks by these names.

But to return, and for the last time, to the subject on which I began, viz., the taking in fair flight of a wild peewit by a hawk. I once had the luck to see this done, and much do I wish that I could adequately describe it. It was one of the

JOHN BARR

FALCONER TO CAPTAIN F. H. SALVIN, 1853-57 ; TO H.H. THE MAHARAJAH
DHULEEP SINGH, 1857-65 ; TO THE FRENCH "CHAMPAGNE HAWKING
CLUB," 1865-69 ; TO THE MARQUIS OF BUTE, 1869 ; TO THE "OLD
HAWKING CLUB," 1872-73 ; TO CAPTAIN DUGMORE, 1874-77 ;
TO THE "NEW FALCONRY CLUB," 1878-79.

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very finest examples of the peregrine's powers, in a state of nature, at difficult quarry, that I have ever seen. The hawk was an old wild peregrine of the downs, and the peewit a fine old cock bird in full nuptial plumage and strength, in the very end of March; and it happened in this wise. Well do I remember the day, March 30, 1864, as I see by my diary. The morning was wintry enough, a constant and wearisome succession of snowstorms, and I was sitting alone in the then well-known "Bustard Inn," which still stands by the side of the old road from Salisbury to Devizes, and just half-way (ten miles) between these towns. The country around was perfectly open, and with hardly a fence in the twenty miles. I was then engaged there in rook hawking, and the hawks were under the care of the well-known young Scotch falconer, Robert Barr, and consisted of a capital lot of six or seven passage falcons (all red hawks), and the first that had been imported for many years for hawking purposes from Mollen, the Dutch hawk-catcher. Little cared Barr for reading or writing, or for any indoor occupation in the daytime. The storms of snow long prevented him from taking out, either for use or for exercise, any of these hawks, but in the afternoon, in a sort of lull—the sky being full of the lurid mauve-coloured clouds that often accompany a downland snowy day—Barr fidgeted so much that he persuaded me to accompany him, with but one hawk on his fist, in quest of a chance at a rook. It was a very unwise proceeding, for very soon after we had left the inn for the Netheravon Downs a short but furious snow-

storm obliged us to seek shelter in a thick plantation of Scotch fir. The storm passed away, and just as we were thinking of moving out, there floated by us, quite close, a fine old peregrine falcon, her breast bleached by age perchance, but I think mainly by weather, almost to the colour of the snow itself. In a moment she was gone, and we again prepared to move. "How I should like, Robert," quoth I, "to have one more look at that fine old falcon as near as that." "You have your wish, sir," said he, "for here she comes again," pointing to something seen with his keen eyes in the far distance. Out came my field-glasses, and there, sure enough, coming rapidly down-wind and straight towards us, was a wild peregrine, though certainly not the bird we had just seen, hotly engaged with a wild peewit, and every instant coming nearer and nearer. Luckily we had not yet deserted our shelter in the plantation, and soon discovered that the advancing hawk was an old wild tiercel, most probably the mate of the falcon just seen. Barr and I were delighted at this chance; for though we had seen the skeleton of many a peewit which a wild hawk had killed and partly eaten, and on this very down had frequently watched some wild peregrine try hard, but in vain, to catch a peewit by repeated stoops, we had never seen "a kill," and had constantly wondered and talked of how the thing was done. On every occasion of this kind we had seen the peregrine follow her usual mode of attack, and execute brilliant stoops, which, however, were always successfully evaded by the peewit, and the flight given up by the falcon, so

far as we could observe. As for mounting, few birds do it easier or better, and none, methinks, so well evade the falcon's stoop as our friend the peewit. This particular flight, however, was worked in a totally different fashion, and entirely down the wind, which was not high.

I know not how the hawk may have begun this flight before the birds came into sight ; but, so far as we could see it, not one single stoop did he attempt. In lieu of stooping, a most effective and to us unusual manoeuvre was adopted. When coming to close quarters, instead of stooping from above, the tiercel always rushed up from below, turned over, and tried to grab the peewit. He was, of course, easily enough "put out," as we expected, by the turns and twists of the hunted bird. No whit discouraged, time after time the hawk went upward in the air for a few yards only after his miss, and then hurled himself downward after, and far faster than, his quarry, passed over him and then turned round, and headed him by some twenty yards or so. The peewit, with the hawk thus waiting for him down-wind, and close at hand, did not dare to hang in the wind, or to fly against it for a single second of time. He had, therefore, no alternative but to go on down-wind as best he could. There lay his adversary, ready and waiting for him ; but the only resource possible to the hunted bird was to elude by some means the hawk's next upward rush and attempted clutch. It came, and grandly was it delivered. Just opposite to us the birds seemed to touch ; and there, we knew, were

the ready feet and sharp pounces to be reckoned with, but, nevertheless, to be as grandly evaded by the peewit. Again, and yet again, rose the hawk from beneath, always intent upon grabbing, and again and again did the peewit turn over, like a great grey moth (or an oyster-shell, according to Robert Barr), just, and only just, to avoid the deadly clutch for a few minutes longer. But his last hour was at length come. It was quite evident to us that this was too hot to last, as upon every repulse, instead of giving the flight up with discomfiture, the hawk hurled himself with yet greater vigour and fury right over his quarry, and waylaid him some few yards down-wind as before; whilst the ground was entirely free from covert, and it was clear that the peewit would do himself no good, but harm, by essaying to mount. As we were comparatively near the two birds, which were evidently too much engaged with their struggle to heed us, we were able to see fully six or eight of these beautiful attempts by the hawk, which clearly were deliberately planned by him, and included none of the stoops which we had till then supposed to be the peregrine's method of catching the peewits we had seen lying dead. Finally (as was to be expected), the peewit seemed to get tired and frightened, and tried to come back up-wind towards the fir covert, which luckily concealed us. This sealed his fate. Up came the tiercel grabbing again, and this time with full success. The two birds met and did not part, for down came the hawk on to the open green down, holding the peewit in his foot. I could stand

the sight no longer; but, mounting my horse, galloped out from the trees. I came so quickly on to the hawk that he was forced to let his quarry go unhurt. Away rose the peewit, and soon afterwards the hawk. As it was then, of course, "all out" with the poor peewit, he had not put many score yards between himself and his enemy (who evidently did not want or mean to lose him) before the latter went for him again, rose quite leisurely over him, this time to a sufficient height in the air, and then, by as lovely a stoop as ever I saw delivered, cut him down stone-dead on the turf before my eyes. I now regret to add that we did not after all allow the hawk to keep his well-earned quarry, for Barr came up and frightened him off it, took it up, and put it in his pocket, remarking that he could easily get another for himself. I was afterwards very sorry for this, and when I met my two friends at dinner, I incurred the well-merited reproaches of one of them (no other than the late A. E. Knox, the accomplished author of "Game Birds and Wildfowl," "Ornithological Rambles in Sussex," and "Autumns on the Spey"), who declared (and, alas! with truth) that it was anything but a gentlemanly or sportsmanlike thing to do, and that I was "a robber of hawks!"

WILD PIGEONS AND MERLINS ON THE DOWNS

UNABLE, or unwilling, as my hawks were to do much with the peewit, they constantly surprised me with their speed and splendid efforts at the very best blue rocks, and farmers' pigeons only caught overnight. When two good tiercels were flown together, the best of pigeons had no great chance with them on a calm day. I have never but once, in my long experience, possessed a tiercel capable of taking a real fine pigeon single-handed. Pigeons, however, are undoubtedly the most favourite prey by far of the peregrine all the world over, and they strain every nerve to overtake them. The two obstacles to success are the various bits of covert, plantations, barns, sheepfolds, &c., now to be found on the most open of our downs, which (given the smallest breeze) a good pigeon will generally reach, in spite of the unaided efforts of a single hawk; the other is the fact that the semi-wild farm pigeons get constant daily flying, and are in fine condition—a condition it is next to impossible to gain with a tame, and necessarily confined, trained hawk. With a cast of hawks employed (and a pair of wild falcons at an eyrie work constantly and harmoniously together at wild and

tame pigeons) the case is reversed, and the odds in very open ground may be on the trained hawks. At the risk of "blowing my own trumpet," I cannot refrain from mentioning the fine pigeon-flying of the best tiercel I have ever had in the past thirty years, an eyess from Lundy Island, of which he bore the name. He could fly when he left his island eyrie, and was "hacked" for the four weeks we usually then insisted on. He had, however, long before that taken to preying for himself, and soon afterwards left the hack altogether. He was accidentally met with (killing a crow) by my falconer, then in search of a lost hawk. He was adroitly driven off, and a useful "set snare" placed on the crow; and, lo! in twenty minutes' time he was safely sitting, hooded, on my servant's gloved hand, who then rode triumphantly home with him. This tiercel had, therefore, six weeks of entire liberty to start with, and in six years afterwards of incessant flying was never lost again for long. He was extraordinarily good towards the end of his career, for he caught three adult kestrels in open ground, and, as he had a great taste for personal encounters with the smaller hawks, he never let slip a chance at a wild sparrow-hawk, of which we caught one; whilst, remarkable as it seems for a trained hawk's diminished powers, he was unmistakably superior to the wild merlins of the down. He never failed to engage with these little falcons on sight, and "fetched them" from the sky over and over again by "ringing up" after them, and so "brought them in" somewhere. But for a bad mistake on my part he

would once have certainly taken a wild merlin, his last two stoops at which knocked it reeling on to the clods of a ploughed field, close, alas! to the inevitable hedge. The mistake was (I was the only horseman then out) that I drove the small hawk from the hedge the wrong way, and, instead of forcing him out (as in magpie hawking) on to open down, where the hedge ended, I drove him towards the shelter of a barn and fold, near to which was a large walnut tree. By this time my men had run up, almost breathless, but it was to no good. Nothing that we could do would keep the merlin from finally gaining the tree or make him leave it, and there we left him. I need not say that I treated with scorn the farm-bailiff's offer of a loaded gun; and so ended the nearest approach to the successful issue of a flight at a wild merlin by a trained hawk that I have ever heard of.

Wild falcons are constantly attracted and called up by the flying of tame hawks on their beats, and often show their dislike to them. In fact, the presence of wild falcons is a serious drawback to the falconer who may have had the misfortune to lose a hawk there, or even to have to leave her out for a single night on "a kill," or for any other reason. For, instead of his truant being within a mile or two of the place next morning, it is more than probable that the wild pair in possession will have attacked and driven her off many a weary mile, and sent her into a region where trained hawks are little known, and where her bells are no protection to her. Both in Scotland and in Ireland on wild moors the con-

stant presence of irritated wild peregrines has had the effect of preventing my meeting with much success there when grouse-hawking. The wild peregrines have usually left the downs in the early spring for incubation. They have everywhere, I believe, a marked preference for one particular place where they eat their prey, usually near an old milestone, a set of anthills, or other higher eminence, whereon they cannot well be surprised unawares. I have constantly met with such places, and have found the remains of six or eight very recent "kills," all without doubt the work of the wild peregrine in the first instance, for no hawk but this feeds in exactly the same way, or bites pieces clean out of the sharp keel of the sternum or breast-bone. Wood pigeons, farmers' pigeons, peewits, and an occasional partridge or starling, but not a single rook or jackdaw, have I there seen. I have never found a peewit's picked remains without wishing that my Lundy tiercel could have put as much zeal and pluck into his many attacks at them as he exhibited when engaged with a wild kestrel, merlin, or sparrow-hawk, or the difficult homing Antwerps he so often had to contend with and so often caught. Once, alas! too often caught, for he eventually came to his death at the hands of an unfriendly neighbour of mine for the unpardonable offence of catching and coming down with one of his homing pigeons. Poor little "Lundy!" his bells, and the feet he used so long and so well for me, are all I could find in my heart to keep of his dishonoured remains.

And here I should not omit to make mention

of another famous eyess tiercel named "Band of Hope," which I then possessed ; for he was born in the same year as "Lundy," though he came from a different eyrie, and the two were often flown together.

"Band of Hope" was sent to me by old Peter Ballantine after a month's "hack" in Ayrshire, and was so called after an equally celebrated tiercel of the same name which Peter had trained for his master, Mr. Ewen of Ewenfield, Ayr, and had flown for several seasons with great success at partridges.¹ Although Peter's bird was well known to many English falconers, few of them probably knew or cared to inquire the origin of the absurd name bestowed. It was suggested, as Peter explained to me, by an incident which occurred on the day of his capture, when a procession of children, calling themselves the *Band of Hope*, happened to pass along the foot of the very cliff in which the eyrie was situated. Thus the Band of Hope tiercel was the one captured on the day of that procession (now some five and thirty years ago), and my bird, taken many years subsequently from the same cliff, was purposely named after him on that account. Both the birds of that name were excellent partridge hawks, and having regard to their docility, courage, high mounting, and splendid stooping, it is doubtful whether their per-

¹ Some account of the doings of this tiercel will be found in Salvin and Brodrick's "Falconry in the British Islands" (1873, p. 66). In 1870-71, being then six years old, he killed unaided 49 partridges, and in the season of 1871-72, 59 partridges represented his share of 346 head of game killed with six hawks.

formances in the field have ever been excelled. My tiercel, "Band of Hope," the second of that name, was constantly flown with "Lundy" in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, and in the latter county on one afternoon, October 2, 1879, as I well remember, these two tiercels between them killed ten partridges.

Both these favourite hawks came, alas! to an untimely end. "Lundy," whose equal no money could have purchased, was knocked on the head with a hoe (see p. 137). "Band of Hope," one of the few game tiercels that would fly rooks well, met his death when five years old at Imber, Wilts, at the hands of the driver of an ox-team at plough. The man left his oxen standing, and killed him with his ox-goad as he sat holding a rook on the ground, and before he could be taken up by us after a long flight. This happened on the 25th March 1880. The feelings of exasperation which possessed us on the two occasions referred to may be more easily imagined than described.

FALCON KILLING SEVERAL BIRDS IN ONE FLIGHT

IT is not the habit of the wild falcon to kill more birds than one at a flight; indeed, such an occurrence may be considered to be of the greatest rarity. Nevertheless I have seen it done more than once by a wild falcon, and many times by my own trained birds—in the case of the wild falcon from having at her first stoop struck down her prey too close to man; from over-keenness, I think, by the tame hawk.

Once when flying my favourite tiercel "Lundy," near Kemble, in Gloucestershire, we found a covey of birds, put them up, and saw one selected by the hawk and driven into covert, from which it could not be moved. This flight ended at a considerable distance from me, and I was alone. There was but little doubt that the hawk would come back to me, sooner or later—a performance most grateful to a falconer, and one in which this particular hawk always distinguished himself. Back he came and swung over my head, following me as I walked along a little pathway, looking for my man, who was himself in search of another hawk which had gone off in a different direction.

I showed my lure as usual to the tiercel, and

he continued high up, mounting steadily in rings, yet always keeping as nearly as possible above me; and thus he soared at a very considerable altitude. In this way we moved on for three more fields. As I crossed the stile leading to the fourth, up rose a covey of birds very *à propos*. The tiercel, as usual, was on the look-out; indeed, so quickly did he sight birds, wherever they might be, that we sometimes said in fun that he could see them with his tail; but, in point of fact, he was always turning his head from side to side, when aloft. Down he came, falling like a stone into the midst of the covey. He appeared just to touch one with a talon; but it fell dead from his foot, bounded up from the stubble again, and then lay still on its back with wings half open. The excited little hawk took no notice of this success, but continued in pursuit of the flying covey, out of which he picked another with the greatest ease and well in sight. I gathered the result of his first stoop, and then took him up from the second partridge, put his swivel into his jesses and the leash into the swivel, held the partridge in the appropriate fashion on my glove, and let him enjoy himself on it as I walked onward to meet the cheerful sight of my man, also thus feeding the other hawk which he had recovered. Tame hawks are generally thus rewarded, and the process gives as much pleasure to their successful owners as to the hawks themselves.

Perhaps nothing shows more clearly the control of man and the perfection to which the training of

so free-flying a bird as a hawk may attain, than this power of keeping it within call (as it were) though the bird is loose and free in the sky. I had a falcon, "Jenny Lind," which would follow me in this manner for a couple of miles; and she also killed more than one bird in a flight. On *that* occasion we had been rook-hawking, and therefore paid no attention to game birds. I had no dog with me, but quite by chance I put up a covey of birds pretty well for this very patient falcon, though at a considerable distance from her. Well do I remember that flight. When she came up to them, she knocked one senseless into a patch of grass, went on and cut another into some bushes, and finally got a third on a rough bank on the side of the canal near Coates Church. I picked up the other two.

Another flight resulting in the death of more than one bird I saw wrought by the tiercel "Lundy" firstly mentioned; but the venue was far away from Gloucestershire or Wilts—the two counties in which most of our sport was obtained. There, indeed, in the five years which preceded his untimely end at the hand of a neighbour—to save a pigeon worth a shilling—he had killed upwards of 400 partridges. On the occasion of the particular flight referred to we were on one of the wildest moors in the west of Ireland, namely, in North-West Mayo, and this time the quarry was grouse. My friend Sir John Dillon, his brother, and I had rented an extensive but ill-stocked moor called Glenlossary, extending over some 20,000 acres of

the worst ground for working in all Ireland. Most of it was of the kind called "tussocky ground," and had to be traversed by jumping across the mud from one tussock to another! The only dogs for this sort of ground are the indigenous red Irish setters. Their wild nature is suited to the rough ground, on which their wiry limbs and strong backs enable them to work untiringly at a rapid pace day after day, covering an extent of ground that no English setter that I have ever seen could possibly work satisfactorily in twice the time. Their noses are simply perfect, and, if they can only be got under thorough control, they are ideal dogs for finding the sparsely-scattered grouse on those wild moors. They will range backward and forward, quartering the ground with amazing endurance, and sometimes at a distance that would astonish most English sportsmen.

We had two of such dogs out that day—one mine, the other my friend's; and after the usual delay, my dog found and stood what we thought could in such a place only be grouse, and the other backed him. We had the hawks ready, so I cast off the tiercel "Lundy," and he gaily mounted in his usual almost perfect style until he had gained his accustomed high pitch. Silent as we had been before, I called out in triumph, "Now we have got them, I think," and went forward to put up the birds, which, of course, must be there. But I had hardly taken a step forward when up jumped a titlark. To my horror and disgust, down came the tiercel with one of his best stoops, and so true

and so sharp was it, that he cut the lark down and swung up again with the impetus of his descent. My falconer ran forward and put his cap over it and his hand under the cap. I shook my fist at the culprit who had thus grievously disappointed us, and glanced at the dogs to see what had happened. There they remained, motionless as ever; and so clear is memory's image of them, that I can recall the fact that one of them (mine) had a drop of saliva near his mouth.

I imagine my gesture of disapproval frightened the hawk, who did not want much inducement to do what I had commanded him instantly to do, namely, to get up to his place again. There he was, higher than before, and, if possible, appeared to be keener. "Now, I think, we shall do," said I, and moved the whole party to where the dogs were standing. "Run in, James; and do you gentlemen keep your eyes on the hawk." A few paces proceeded James in front of the dogs, when up jumped a small brood of Glenlossera grouse, and away they went, best pace, down wind. Down came the tiercel, who was far and away the best footer for an eyess I have ever seen—in fact, he flew and footed more like a passage hawk than an eyess, one of the reasons for this excellence doubtless being that after a month's "flying at hack" in Gloucestershire as a young bird, he left the place and foraged for himself entirely for over six weeks.

The first grouse he reached he cut over with the greatest ease. It was an old bird, and fell dead in the heather, out of which I could just see the

ENGLISH AND FRENCH FALCONERS ON SALISBURY PLAIN

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LIEUT.-COL. H. WATSON

P. A. PICHOT, J. E. HARTING, GEORGE OXER (falconer to the "Old Hawking Club"),
A. BELVALETTE, W. H. ST. QUINTIN, HON. GERALD LASCELLES (hon. sec., "Old
Hawking Club"), JOHN FROST, Jun. (assistant falconer to the "Old Hawking Club"),

ARTHUR NEWALL, E. HARE, W. M. CLARKE, B. HEYWOOD JONES

1905



The "Norman" Club

white feet raised with a tremulous motion, after which they remained perfectly still. The tiercel never heeded it, but went on after the fleeing pack. When he drew level with them he shot up, turned over, stooped, and cut down a full-grown young one, which fell into some gorse and grass that hid it from his view. This bird also the tiercel took no notice of, but went on, and, to the astonishment of all of us, again reached the covey, out of which he this time clutched a fine young grouse in his foot, and came down with it.

And now, having mentioned some flights of trained hawks which resulted in the death of more than one bird, I will describe the case of a wild falcon doing the same thing; and though I have often seen the wild falcons on the Wiltshire Downs catch partridges, this was the only instance I ever witnessed of a double capture by one of them. I was seeking a lost hawk, and, walking across some stubble, I put up a fine covey of partridges—a fortunate circumstance, for if my hawk were anywhere near, I should be sure to see her attracted by the birds. A moment later the expectation seemed to be fulfilled, for, out of the sky, with a downward rush, a fine peregrine falcon almost instantly overtook the covey and struck one down. This bird happened to fall quite near to two labourers walking homeward, and the falcon went on and cut out another, which she carried off. No doubt she killed the second bird because the first had been lost to her owing to the presence of the men.

I remember also, years ago, that the “Old

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Hawking Club" had an excellent rook-hawk named "Esmeralda"—a fine young passage falcon. When "made" to rooks, she liked nothing so much as being hooded off at a flock. She would drive them together like sheep, and then getting well above them would stoop into their midst and strike down two of them in two successive stoops. I several times saw her accomplish this feat, and my friend Mr. J. E. Harting, from an entry in one of his note-books, is able to remind me of the very year in which this happened, having witnessed a similar performance by this same hawk on the Wiltshire Downs on the 7th April 1876. The falconers then present were the Hon. G. Lascelles, Hon. Cecil Duncombe, Captain F. H. Salvin, Francis Newcome (son of Edward Clough Newcome), and J. E. Harting. In that same year another famous hawk, "Bois-la-duc" (so named from his Dutch origin), was flown by the same party with great success at rooks on the downs.

HAWKS DINNA PICK OOT HAWKS' EEN

—*Scotch Proverb.*

AN experienced Anglo-Indian falconer, Lieut.-Col. Delmé Radcliffe (formerly of the 88th Regt.), once remarked to me, anent a favourite shaheen falcon, that if she could but have been persuaded to fly the glossy ibis and sand-grouse with the speed, courage, and determination she invariably displayed when engaged with a wild hawk, she would have been invaluable; for certain it was that when loose she never met a wild falcon of the many species inhabiting India, and anything like herself in size, without at once engaging in an aerial encounter. In so doing, this falcon, evidently wrought up to a pitch of fury, exhibited powers of stooping, footing, and shifting, which he had seldom or never seen equalled by a trained hawk. The shaheen is the favourite game hawk of the Indian falconers, and, unlike her relative the peregrine, breeds in many parts of British India.

Many trained falcons are inclined (in falconer's language) to "crab" or "grab" one another when two are flown together. Some almost invariably quarrel in the air; and all of them, when used in couples (in falconer's language "a cast"), require to have some acquaintanceship with one another,

and be on friendly terms in the hawk-house and at the lure, or they will attack each other. But it is unusual for well-trained falcons, thus acquainted, to "crab" each other, though we may see them ready, nay, eager to quarrel in real earnest with their wild relatives, who frequently come to have a look at them when flown near their haunts. In point of fact, all falconers have had experience of the great superiority of the wild hawk to the best of her species when tamed and trained, and, as the French falconers say, "*dans les mains d'homme.*" In fact, in forty years' experience of practical falconry, I have never possessed but two peregrines that could hold their own, for even a short time, on fairly equal terms with their quarrelsome wild relatives. Strange to say, both of these were eyesses, and both hailed from a well-known eyrie on Lundy Island, whence came the white-breasted falcons so sought for and prized in former days.

I have known wild falcons stick to their bickering with one of these two Lundy hawks (which were falcon and tiercel) for a very long time. Though in nineteen times out of twenty the wild falcon, if in earnest, has it all her own way, and generally succeeds in making the trained hawk sit down, or turn tail and "come in" to her master, or drives her or him clean out of the country, I remember two instances in which the Lundy peregrines fairly surprised me in this respect, one of them being the falcon whose career was cut short soon after the occurrence I am about to relate, by a selfish neighbour in Argyllshire. This bird had been lost

by carrying a small grouse and eating it on an inaccessible ledge of rock. After thus getting a full crop, she disdained to notice a lure of any kind. The next morning we found her somewhere near the same place, and took her down with a pigeon. She was quite tame, and we thought we had got her safe and sound; and so we should have done, but for a pair of wild falcons that frequented the same rocks, though I knew it not. While our bird was making her meal, with a fighting cry like a sharp, snapping bark, a wild peregrine suddenly appeared on the scene, stooped at her, and knocked her clean off the pigeon. The aggressor, we soon saw, was a tiercel. The tame hawk resented this entertainment, and the two were soon hard at it, hammer and tongs, mounting and stooping at each other, high in the air. I certainly did not see, and was astonished not to see, the usual superiority of the wild bird over the tame one manifested. The wild peregrine appeared to be doing his utmost, but I was fairly surprised at the ability displayed by my tame one. She was the aggressor throughout the engagement after the first stoop, and finally succeeded (I suppose by a lucky stoop) in taking the tiercel in the air and coming down with him. This, as might have been expected, brought up the tiercel's mate—an unusually large and powerful falcon. The two together were far too much for my falcon, and they finally drove her off, stooping at her alternately, turn and turn about, till all three went clean out of our sight.

This untoward accident caused the death of this

fine falcon next day. Having her own living to get—and being very well able to get it—when driven from my moor she found herself over the moor of the only near neighbour whom I had not begged to respect my birds carrying bells, all the rest having kindly promised to do so. She had been used to black and white setters, and this neighbour was then shooting over dogs of the same colour. She “waited on” nearly out of sight, as usual. When these setters got a point, the keeper told his master he thought that the hawk was a tame one belonging to the gentleman who rented L——. The master advanced and up went the grouse; whereupon down came the falcon and took one before their eyes, and sat down to enjoy it, doubtless making her bells sound well. I regret to say my selfish neighbour had so little thought or care for others’ sport that he advanced and shot her dead. He did even worse, for he sent her to the local bird-stuffer, from whom I subsequently obtained her skin. I was, of course, extremely vexed; but I wrote as civilly as I could in the circumstances requesting the return of the two Indian bells she had been wearing. I received only the verbal answer that the hawk was a trespasser and poacher, and had only been served as befitted such customers. I sent my gillie with another letter calling attention to a word used to denote one who possesses himself of the goods of others without acknowledgment or return. This produced only one of the bells, wrapped up in a bit of waste-paper! I recovered her skin from

the bird-stuffer to whom it had been sent, with regret for such a termination to so promising a career.

Years afterwards I procured and trained a male peregrine from the same eyrie—one of the best eyess tiercels I have ever seen—which I used almost entirely for partridge hawking, having then no grouse-moor of my own. Of these birds he killed nearly 400 in five seasons. Most falconers greatly prefer the female peregrine for grouse, as her weight and strength tell well when she is matched against a hard old cock grouse—and what bird is harder than he? However, it is certain that an extra large and good eyess peregrine tiercel can “once in a blue-moon” charm a falconer’s eyes by rivalling the best of falcons at this best of all quarries: witness a celebrated eyess tiercel belonging to “The Old Hawking Club,” and called “Persimmon,” which did so well at this quarry in Ireland. I confess that, in all my long experience, I have never had but one such; and that, as already related (p. 139), fell a victim to a bad neighbour of mine, for the offence of capturing a homing pigeon, and that not a valuable one.

He, too, was ever disposed to match his powers against almost any wild hawk. Of course, inland, he very seldom got the chance to quarrel with a wild peregrine; and, equally of course, he must have got the worst of it with such an adversary. But with sparrow-hawks, kestrels, and merlins, the result was otherwise. Like Col. Delmé Radcliffe’s shaheen, he certainly displayed surprising ability

in these strange and somewhat unusual flights ; and I must confess I had never any fault either to find with his flights at grouse or partridge—our accustomed quarry. He got four or five kestrels ; and though I never saw him kill a sparrow-hawk (which, indeed, being a bird of the wood, seldom gives a peregrine a chance to bring it to book in the open), I have seen him beat them handsomely into covert, and cut bunches of feathers out of them.

Strange to say, that adroit and swift little falcon, the merlin, fared no better with him. I have three times seen him engaged with a wild merlin ; in each case he had all along the best of the combat, and the merlin only saved himself by getting into covert. On the third occasion, I really thought he would have caught an adult female merlin, for the space needed for such a flight to be successful was all but available on that occasion. He was "waiting on" at a good height for partridges on the Wiltshire Downs, and we did not find them sufficiently soon to satisfy him—for we constantly cast him loose without a point or a sight of the birds, and had done so then. Suddenly he changed his wide rings to a straightforward upward rush, like that of an arrow from the bow. My glasses, instantly brought into use, showed two hawks instead of one, and in a little time they revealed that, judging from its length of tail, the new-comer was a merlin. The aggressor was, of course, the Lundy tiercel ; and, from what I saw of the encounter, no merlin that ever flew could have escaped from him over perfectly open ground. He constantly "fetched" the

merlin, fly where she would, easily getting above her; and possibly with some regard to his owner and the rest of the party, brought the flight towards us instead of away from us. A more beautiful trial of speed and ability of wing I never saw. To make a long story short, the merlin naturally went for the only covert within sight, a long low hedge (part of some neglected enclosure on the open down), hotly pursued by the tiercel, who, with each stoop and shift of the merlin, threw himself up in the grandest manner. At last, a well-directed stoop took effect; a few feathers hung in the motionless air, and the blow hurled the merlin to the ground, which I remember was a piece of fallow. "We have got him! we have got him!" we cried; and so indeed we should have done—for the tiercel repeated this performance three several times. I rode under him, and, as he three times knocked the merlin on the clods, each time making a cloud of dust rise from the concussion, and my bird was quite ready to repeat it, I felt quite sure we should accomplish the probably unknown feat of taking a wild merlin in the prime of life and condition with a tame and trained hawk. The last of these knock-down blows, however, took place close to the hedge, and the merlin just struggled into the fence. My men, unfortunately, were too far behind me to beat both sides of the hedge. I got off my horse, and succeeded several times in putting the merlin out, though the attack of the tiercel at once put him in again. One end of the hedge terminated on the open down; the other reached a small barn

and yard, in the centre of which was a tall walnut tree. My men came up, and, excited as we were, we committed the unfortunate blunder of omitting to drive our quarry out at the open end of the hedge, or to the open green down, and of driving her towards the barn. The end of it was that she just struggled into the thick middle of the walnut tree. Of course, no stones, sticks, or cries coming from us had the least effect upon her. There she remained; and though the bailiff who lived there brought me his gun, thinking I should like to shoot her, it is needless to say I rejected the proposal with contempt, and left the poor merlin, but little the worse for her recent troubles, in peace and safety.

I well remember a fine flight obtained one September afternoon, calm, warm, and still, on the delicious open Wiltshire Downs, fragrant with thyme, and silent save for the distant bleating of sheep or the bark of the dog driving them. It was past four o'clock, and the teams had therefore left work, and with attendant labourers had gone home to the far-off villages. There was no one within sight or hearing of our party, which consisted of four—myself (mounted), my falconer, his assistant, and the cadge-man, who carried the hawks on their cadge. We had enjoyed fair sport, and were returning homeward with some four brace of partridges, and were very tired; for the cultivated fields in that part of England are usually found of great extent; many are far distant from one another; and in these days of short stubbles and no hedges

—the farms being separated only by strips of unploughed down—a great deal of walking is involved in the sport. All the hawks had been flown successfully, perhaps twice or three times each. This would be enough work for most trained hawks, though I have owned one which could well be flown oftener, and has occasionally been put to the task of flying six times in one day, and has acquitted himself well, killing six fine October partridges. As a general rule, hawks that have been flown their usual number of times are, in falconer's language, "fed up" according to their deserts or their condition. And in this connection it may be observed that no two hawks require exactly the same quantity or quality of food; and one of the chief necessities of the falconer is to become acquainted with the conditions under which each one of his hawks flies its best. A big, dull, sluggish bird, of course, requires to be set on a far higher "pin of appetite" (old books) than an eager bird, who is always ready and always hungry. Every falconer would like to see his cadge occupied by hawks in this condition, and at night those on the pole also—for this means that all the hawks have been flown successfully during the day and none lost, or left at home suitably fed for the morrow. At the time above alluded to, I made it a common practice to reserve one hawk for the *last* evening flight; because, although with a brace of good hawks one frequently traversed at least a thousand acres in a day, working only covert or stubble of some kind, we always expected to find towards evening that a certain proportion of par-

tridges had come together again, however scattered they might have been on the great expanses of stubble, which frequently average as much as fifty acres each. It was hopeless to expect the dogs to range far enough to find birds there late in the day, or possess as much dash as in the morning, and equally unlikely that the birds would lie to be found. What we did, therefore, was this—and I am bound to say I have seen some of the best sport at partridges attained in the same manner (it is recommended, moreover, by Sir John Sebright in his "Observations on Hawking") :—We were a couple of miles from home, and thought we might still get one, or possibly two flights. The method followed was this. We formed a line, though four people do not make a very long one, and eight would have been better, while I rode in the middle. The dogs hunted or not as they pleased. I took on my fist an unfed hawk named "Erin"—one of the hottest and keenest falcons that ever came from the Emerald Isle, and we slowly advanced over the big stubble field. We had for some time been very unlucky in our search for partridges, and I was, therefore, most anxious to get a flight at any bird that might offer. In vain I swept miles of ground with my glasses, not a wing stirred anywhere; nor, I am sure, did any of us see a bird of any kind for at least an hour, save an old female sparrow-hawk which was often noticed about the place, and was remarkable for her very light colour, hunting assiduously in sparrow-hawk fashion. We thought no more about her, and only wished she

could have been changed into a rook. I cast off "Erin," who was evidently as anxious as we were to see something that could be flown at; she mounted well, and through the glass I could see her turn her head in every direction in the look-out for prey—but in vain. And the chances of killing a partridge, even if we found one just there, were very small, for at no great distance was a long belt of timber which divided two of the fields, and this offered shelter to any winged fugitive. With the singular ill-luck that sometimes attends falconers as well as other sportsmen, we had ranged acres of stubble in vain, and the only covey of partridges that we were to see that night sprang up at a great distance and made straight for the timber. Away went the falcon, making her bells ring with every clip of her wings, and being at a good height, she gained on them rapidly. Just as they entered the timber she stooped, but just a second too late. I thought she might have managed it, for the trees were high and the covert thin. But no; we were not fated to kill a partridge that evening, for presently the hawk appeared circling high above the timber, doubtless seeking what she could not find. I said to my servant, "Take her down, and we will go home." He shook out the lure, and the falcon turned her head and made straight for us. "All right, sir; she's coming," said he. "She's coming, but do you think she's coming to your lure?" "Why, of course, sir; I have just shown it to her." "Look at her wings; she is not coming to your lure on wings held like that? She is flying something."

He looked incredulously about him. "And what is she going to fly at?" said he. "Look at her now." The hawk was close to us and coming at her best pace. "Fling out your lure; you will see whether she is coming to it." He did so, though he ought to have known that she was not attending to it at all. Over our heads she came, like an arrow from the bow; and, looking back at the long expanse of perfectly open ground behind us, I saw the small figure of the old sparrow-hawk, making at her best pace for a distant belt of larch trees, probably half a mile away, or more. "Now, James," said I, "mark my words; she is flying that old sparrow-hawk." And truly she was. Nearer and nearer she came to the distant speck, as clearly shown by the glasses; and to me it seemed that never was sparrow-hawk in greater danger. Presently "Erin" swung round. "She's going to stoop," I said. And down she came like a stone at the old sparrow-hawk below her. A clever shift by the quarry, and the falcon was a long way below, while the hawk made the utmost efforts to gain what was the only shelter available. Up went the falcon again, stooped, and again a clever shift put her out. She did this a third time with the same result—doing thereby what eyesses do in contradistinction to passage hawks that have long preyed for themselves and know how to set about it. The stoop a falcon can deliver from a small height is of little avail in bringing to hand any quarry that can shift well, and it is not to be compared with one delivered from the height of a quarter of a mile in the masterly

manner of a falcon that has had to get her own living. However, all was in favour of the eyess falcon, which, if high enough, might have disabled her antagonist at the first or second stoop instead of being "put out" time after time and incurring the danger of finally losing the sparrow-hawk in the timber.

The ground being perfectly clear, however, was encouraging to the hawk, which had plenty of wind for flying, and in the open the quarry has to trust to flight alone. On the open downs the best pair of wings generally wins.

"Erin" was not to be daunted, and began to fly as a falcon should, making two or three wide rings high in the air, apparently disregarding the sparrow-hawk altogether. Some one behind me said, "She's giving it up;" as indeed she appeared to be doing. The sparrow-hawk was still going straight for her wished-for shelter, which, however, she was destined never to gain; for, having attained a sufficient pitch, the falcon dashed forward, and stooped again, and this time I saw a cloud of feathers left in the air behind her. The poor sparrow-hawk reeled from the blow. "That's a nasty one," said some one. "Yes, the sparrow-hawk's a dead bird." One more stoop. The two birds met in the air and did not separate. The smaller hawk could be seen in the clutches of the larger one as both came rapidly to the ground.

Not being able to gallop and use the glass at the same time, I had remained quiescent while the flight lasted, and then galloped to where the last of this interesting struggle had been seen. I could hear

the falcon's bell, but could not see her, for both birds had fallen into a patch of high rape. Up came the fastest runner of the men, and, guided by the occasional sound of the bell, soon found her. We gathered around to have a look at her, and there was "Erin" with the sparrow-hawk in her foot, the head of the latter severed from the neck, and lying on one side.

We fed her on something better than that, to wit, an old partridge—for to such uses we generally put our old partridges—and took her home.

The foot of that old sparrow-hawk was long preserved; for it does not fall to every falconer's lot to be able truthfully to say that he has killed an old female sparrow-hawk in fair open flight after many stoops by a trained falcon.

FRANCIS HENRY SALVIN

JOINT AUTHOR WITH WILLIAM BRODRICK OF

"FALCONRY IN THE BRITISH ISLANDS"

(MARCH 1873)



TO MY
FATHER

LOST HAWKS

WHEN a hawk is lost, however this untoward event has come about, it behoves the falconer to be acutely watchful for any sight or sound indicative of the presence of the truant, and to make inquiries of every one likely to have met with her anywhere in the neighbourhood; nor should he go out of doors without a lure, hood, and glove, as well as proper snares for a possible recapture. One of the most hopeful signs of the presence of a lost trained hawk is what falconers call the "mobbing of rooks"—a sign which is particularly important on such a place, for example, as Salisbury Plain, where rooks are ubiquitous, and naturally averse to hawks. On such an occasion the seekers should avail themselves of every elevation, the better to survey minutely with their glasses the extended landscape, happy if at any time they can discover, far or near, minute dots in the sky remaining long very near the same place. These will probably turn out to be a cloud of rooks, high in air, watching the falcon making a meal off one of their tribe, but powerless to rescue it from her. Leave her they will not, but for an hour or so they will never cease from wheeling about in air above a scene doubtless sufficiently sad to them, for meanwhile they never once cease

chanting their late friend's dirge. No music is half so attractive to the owner of a lost hawk, especially when his eyes as well as his ears have assured him of the proximity of what has been so long sought for in vain.

Upon one occasion, I was seeking a hawk called the "Queen of Sheba," that had been lost that day after a distant flight at rooks which she had put into covert, after which she had gone off in search of others, but whither, we knew not. An hour or more had elapsed, when my falconer (then Robert Barr) asked me to lend him my glasses. He returned them to me, saying, "We have her, sir, I think. Just look at those rooks mobbing out yonder." My sight was scarcely so good as his; but, conspicuous against the background of white cloud, I rejoiced to see "rooks mobbing." So far off was it, that although the birds thus employed formed apparently a large proportion of one of the largest colonies in the district, they appeared in the glass but as a few tiny specks. In fact, on attempting the approach, we found that we had to go at least three miles out of our way before our eyes could be gratified with a sight of the "Queen of Sheba," who was discovered coolly eating a rook on an anthill on the open down. She was an exceedingly tame falcon, so we had no difficulty whatever in taking her up, though she had all but a "full crop"; and much I wish all falconers had such another falcon, for she was one of the best eyess rook-hawks I ever owned.

I may here mention a display of confidence and

affection in the case of a young passage falcon which I had received from Holland—such a display as I have never seen, before or since, in any wild falcon, though I have had some excellent hawks of this kind in my thirty - nine years' experience of hawking, usually procuring two passage hawks annually, besides eyesses. I do not know that I had been particularly kind to this falcon, and I am sure that she was not very hungry, but, having called her once or twice on a long line, she showed such utter fearlessness that, as my falconer said, no parrot could have been tamer. This being so, I soon proceeded to call her entirely loose, and so rash was I, that I caused this to be done by my falconer holding her up and letting her fly from an eminence at least three hundred yards off to me, in the field where I generally called my hawks. He held her up; I made a sign with my handkerchief; off went her hood, and I showed the dead lure I had been in the habit of calling her to. She came to me at once, and wheeled close round my head, looking down. I had hidden the lure in my pocket, and apparently she suspected that it was somewhere close at hand; and this passage falcon, so recently caught in Holland, dropped on the ground a couple of feet from my foot, and I, falconer-like, extended my gloved hand to her, and she, without a moment's hesitation, dashed up on my hand and looked about her without the least trace of fear. I gave her a bit or two of meat, put on her hood, and sent my man back even farther with her. She positively came to me on sight, without any lure or calling at

all, and waited on so persistently and steadily that I was enchanted, and forgot all about caution. Always taking much interest in the docility and manners of my hawks, I am afraid I then forgot the fact that this very tame bird (which was one of the handsomest light-coloured falcons I have ever seen, and held her wings as only a passage falcon can hold them) was not an eyess; and I also forgot the warning given me by my old master in the craft, John Pells—a short sketch of whose life has already been given—namely, that hawks are not playthings, and one should never be rash with them. Unluckily, I did not then remember this warning. Presently my falconer came up. “O sir, take her down, take her down!” he said; “you forget that she is a passage hawk.” “Only one turn more,” said I enraptured, my attention being wholly given to the present performance of the hawk. “O Lord! it’s too late!” I heard him call out. The hawk, which had not even bells on, caught sight of a lot of pigeons at exercise, something like a quarter of a mile off, and setting off with a speed delightful to witness, disappeared over a distant hill, and from that day to this we never even saw or heard of her! A year later, however, a hawk was sent to me in a basket by a keeper at Cirencester, which I suspect was the same bird, alas! with a broken leg—the result of having been caught in a trap. We could get no doctor to set it satisfactorily, and the hawk finally pined away, and died in misery. But from what I saw of her she seemed to be nearly as tame and confident as the one I had lost a year earlier,

though her appearance had been changed in the meantime by moulting.

There are few subjects of more importance to the falconer than the means of recovering a lost hawk, since, now-a-days, for a trained hawk to be lost, and especially to be "left out," means to be shot. In my experience it is almost always the best hawks—*i.e.* those with most courage and spirit, ready to fly at anything—that are tempted away from the accustomed rooks and partridges by the sudden apparition, below or in front of them, of that bane of English falconers, the wood-pigeon, and so are lost.

The falconer who sets out on his dreary search after the wanderer should observe any apparent change in the conduct and motions of the feathered tribes within range of his eyes or his glasses. Nearly all of these act differently on the approach of a bird of prey, and these signs may be translated so accurately as ultimately to lead to the recovery of the lost hawk. Indeed, I will go further, for I have known both horses and cows feeding at large to be seriously disturbed by a hawk ringing her bells while passing over or near them, and by this visible unrest indicate the presence of the truant. The hawk-seeker should always keep on the highest ground accessible to him, make constant inquiries, and be liberal with beer-money and promises. In a moorland country the many burns are often a source of trouble, from the noise of their falling waters, rendering the sound of the bells indistinct, if not inaudible, save to highly sensitive ears. Moreover,

the sides of burns and watercourses are frequently resorted to by grouse when pursued by a falcon, and so should always be more carefully searched.

Well do I remember finding and recovering, after a search of two hours' duration, a valuable hawk—already mentioned in the chapter on black grouse. It was late in the afternoon of an October day when I lost her, in my last flight on a neighbour's moor at Argyllshire grouse. We all separated to seek her, and I was alone and some distance from home (the others being engaged on the same errand as myself), when I gave her up for lost and turned homeward; for the grouse were strong, and she had gone a long way after them.

Somewhere about a mile from the place where I had last seen her, the glasses showed me a carrion crow (*Corvus corone*) on the topmost bough of a tall oak, one of a grove of fine trees in a valley at the moor edge. He was too far off for his tuneful note to reach me, but the more I looked at him through the glass, the more I felt satisfied that he was giving tongue lustily for some reason known to himself. His motions on the tree top, I need hardly say, were restless and uneasy to a degree: first his head went down, then it went up; then his tail balanced, and his body moved from left to right. On my nearing him after a while, he still continued these antics; and I, who had never considered the note of the crow (wild and in its natural habitat) unmusical, never heard one with greater pleasure, for it roused in me the hope which, though constantly disappointed, and never more often than

in the quest of a lost hawk, certainly does spring eternal in the human breast, and in my case was closely associated with "Bluefoot."

One reason why I paid especial attention to the gymnastics of this black sentinel was that "Bluefoot" had the common habit of remaining perfectly motionless when on any sort of quarry; I cannot say when "eating quarry," for at the sight of a man at any distance, she invariably left off feeding, however hungry, in order, perhaps, as my falconer said, not to betray her presence by the noise of her bell, but, as I believe, rather from the shy habit of attempting concealment by remaining perfectly still—a habit common to many birds of prey.

Many a falcon, time after time, has almost been walked over by myself and my falconer, when hidden in thick covert such as fern, heather, or high turnips, and yet we were unable to discover any trace of the bird, or hear the least sound proceeding from her bell. One or other of us following after, would suddenly come on the bird remaining motionless where she had been overlooked. I remember more than one instance in which I had actually seen the hawk catch, though from a distance, it is true, and feeling convinced that she had gone farther, eventually discovered her by her bright dark eye shining out of the gloom, possibly by its reflection of a setting sunlight.

But to return to the lost "Bluefoot." Many a time did I walk all round that particular oak which stood alone at the entrance to the wood, and was surrounded by a deep bed of common bracken fern.

The crow was apparently too much interested in what he saw below him to take much notice of me ; and I eventually found the hawk close to the bole of the tree and in deep bracken, probably by her black eyeball looking at me, and with nearly a full crop from a splendid old cock grouse beneath her. In my heart I thanked the crow, and have only shot at one of his race since that day ; but I must admit having taken one or two of them since then with trained falcons.

Hawks that have been well entered to game may be lost for a time and be none the worse for it. Indeed, they may be improved by a temporary restoration to freedom, and forget nothing of what they have learnt. A "screamer" has been cured of her disagreeable habit by being turned out for a time and treated like a hawk "at hack." Such treatment will also favour a hawk when moulting. Every falconer of experience knows that it is not unusual to lose a hawk, not merely for days, but for weeks, and then recover her in an improved condition, consequent upon her getting more exercise while killing live prey for herself daily. I once lost, on Riddlehamhope Moor, a falcon called "Lundy," on the 23rd August, and took her up on the 23rd September following. She had been out exactly a month, killing grouse for herself every day, and was in splendid condition, with several new feathers in her. Although so long a truant, she had forgotten nothing of her training, quietly allowed herself to be hooded and fed bare-headed on the hand the same evening. The curious

thing was that she had contrived to elude observation all the time she was out, and although we were daily on the moor (my friend J. E. Harting was with me at the time), she was not seen from the day she was lost until the day we lured her down with a live pigeon, and snared her.

Both eyesses and wild-caught peregrines which are constantly flown over the same piece of "country" acquire a remarkable knowledge and apparent recollection of and fondness for it, even returning to it after a protracted absence when lost. Of course, this is by no means a matter of surprise in the case of eyess or nestling peregrines brought up "at hack" from their earliest days; and especially is the habit of returning to an accustomed feeding-place strongly impressed upon them.

I remember once, when staying at Cirencester, observing two young peregrine falcons, both carrying bells, amusing themselves in Lord Bathurst's park, and over the stately trees of that stately place. For obvious reasons, these apparent strays could have belonged to no one but myself. It was towards the end of the month, or five weeks, during which, in those happier days, we were able to allow our young hawks to enjoy full liberty "at hack," and I supposed that (as often happens) the eyesses I had seen had deserted the "hack," and were practically lost. So I at once sent a servant on horseback the thirteen miles, as the crow flies, which separates Cirencester from my house, with a note to my falconer bidding him come up early

next morning and seek for the strays. This was late in the afternoon, and at dinner-time I received a line in reply from him to the effect that he had counted the hawks (four or five) which he then had "at hack" at their evening feed, and that they were all right at 6 P.M. Hawks such as these would make but a very short passage of thirteen miles. The wonder was that, having strayed so far (and doubtless often very much farther, for I have heard of them at double the distance), they should have returned whence they came of their own accord. "Passage" or wild-caught falcons have much of the same inclination. I have myself lost two of this class from my grouse moor in Northumberland, one for fourteen and the other, as above related, for twenty-eight consecutive days.

The former, a passage falcon, was lost there late one afternoon on a grouse—and she must have taken nearly an hour to get a "crop" from it. She was observed at roost nine miles off that same evening (though hawks do not usually fly far with a full gorge), and returned to us fourteen days later.

I may here mention a fact I had from the late John Pells, one of the best professional falconers of his day, and I believe the story to have been literally true. Pells was at the time in the service of Mr. Yelverton O'Keefe, and in charge of the hawks of that gentleman, then living near the Curragh of Kildare. He had twelve falcons and tiercels at work there, and, as most of us do, kept a row of little wooden blocks on a suitable lawn near his house. A favourite falcon was lost, how I know

not, nor did it much matter except to the anxious falconer. Well do I remember John Pells' habit on other occasions, and his growl of anger at the sight of the lost hawk's untenanted block. "Take that thing away; it makes me sick to see it," quoth he. Not so felt Mr. O'Keefe, who himself confirmed this story to me, and declared that, for some reason or another, he would not suffer the line of blocks on the lawn to be shortened by one. A month passed away, as often happens, without tidings of the poor falcon, who was given up for lost; but on the twenty-eighth day from her loss Mr. O'Keefe looked out on his lawn before breakfast, and saw every block occupied by a hawk.

After breakfast Pells came in, and Mr. O'Keefe remonstrated with him for having removed the lost hawk's block contrary to his wishes. Pells knew that he had not done so, and that no one else would have dared to do anything of the sort. One long look from the window: "Count the hawks out there," said he, and rushed out of the room. Mr. O'Keefe, of course, made good speed after him, for he too had counted twelve, and not eleven peregrines sitting in a row. So there were, with the difference that eleven of them were safely tied up with leash and swivel, whilst she of the twelfth block, the lost hawk in fact, was free as air, and a visitor only to her old friends. She was, of course, hungry, and came at once to the proffered lure, and was well fed up upon it, and returned to her block once more wearing her own proper leash and swivel. This circumstance was deemed so very remarkable by her

owner, that, with much ceremony, she was there and then christened "Wonderful," and was for long a good and favourite hawk of his.

I will conclude this chapter on lost hawks with an account of one that was out for *six months*, and yet was tame enough to come to a lure.

She was a fine moulted eyess falcon, which, on account of her singularly dark colour and black cheeks, we had named "The Queen of Sheba." She was an excellent rook-hawk, of Scottish origin, and did us good service during more than one season at rooks on the Wiltshire Downs, for which sport indeed she was chiefly used. I was then in the service, and tied for time. We had the misfortune to lose this falcon, after rooks, the day before my leave expired, and on which day I had to return to quarters. We could not find her, and although my servant was left behind with the other hawks in the hope that he might do so, he had to return home without the "Queen of Sheba."

I may here remark that this falcon always showed a marked preference for me, by whom she had first been trained, and indicated still more plainly a dislike to my falconer, whose manner of hooding was different from mine, and was possibly the cause of her aversion to him. So she remained behind in Wiltshire while we returned home. I occasionally heard reports of her having been seen from time to time, and conceived that she had resumed her wild habits. When this has occurred with a trained falcon, and she has regained the power of killing pigeons tame and wild, it is exceed-

ingly difficult to recover possession of her. Thus no further search was made for her.

This falcon was lost early in April. In September we returned to the same district for partridge-hawking. One day the hawk flown was the eyess tiercel "Lundy," one of the best game hawks I ever had. He could kill partridges all through the season and up to the very end of it. The first partridge, put up out of some roots, he struck down on a piece of short old "lay," and proceeded to plume it there. Suddenly a falcon descended from the sky, and, passing within easy gunshot of us, appeared to be a very dark one. Wild peregrines are so commonly met with on the Wiltshire Downs, and so often attend trained hawks on the wing there, that the sight in no way surprised us. But what did surprise us was that the strange falcon at once went down to and joined the trained tiercel on the partridge. Both birds enjoyed their meal most amicably before our eyes, and not fifty yards off!

"Do you see that?" said I to my servant. "And what falcon do you think that is?"

"Why, our old 'Queen of Sheba'; none other. I knew her directly I saw her," he replied.

"And so did I; and so did 'Lundy,' and well eno' too," was my answer. For when with us she had been accustomed to sit next him on the same perch. Moreover, we recognised the old "Queen" by her style of flying, her contour, and her exceedingly dark-coloured head.

We were a long way from home, and, as bad

luck would have it, we had no snaring-line with us, an article no falconer should ever be without. There we were, with a splendid falcon (practically wild for nearly six months) almost inviting capture, than which nothing should have been easier for us to effect. We had only the short lure-string; and, of course, on a nearer approach, "Lundy" remained, glad to see us, whilst our old friend the "Queen of Sheba" left her unearned meal and showed her contempt for us by her loud chattering note of anger, which I fully believe was intended for James and not for me. Away she went, and was soon high up in the sky, clearly visible against a white cloud, where she long remained, evidently regarding us, and perhaps looking out for another partridge.

We saw her once more, after yet another interval of six months. The same pair of us, in the same district, had lost a hawk—a common enough occurrence, I am sorry to say, though often followed by a recapture. We were, of course, looking out in every direction for any sight or sound that could possibly assist our search. Tired out, we were going home, and making a short cut through the park of a friend, much frequented by wood-pigeons and rooks, and therefore, from the protection it afforded from all but the keeper's gun, much frequented by a lost trained hawk, which, indeed, from having once been trained, has always less dread of man than the wild falcon. Before leaving the park, my servant, making one more effort to attract the hawk, took out his lure, and, whirling it round, cast

it high in air, meanwhile holloaing in falconer's fashion.

"How I should like to see the falcon come to that!" said I.

"You have your wish, sir," quoth he; "for here she comes." And, sure enough, we saw a falcon approaching.

"Well, what a stroke of luck!" And so we deemed it; but we were once more to be disappointed, for the falcon in question was undoubtedly not our lost one of yesterday, but no other than the "Queen of Sheba" herself, lost so much longer. She had almost certainly fed; she disdained the lure, and flew past without heeding it. Her approaching us was not strange, for with some lost eyesses the fear of man is hardly regained for a length of time; and this fact is, of course, most evident in the case of very tame and good-natured birds. In this instance, however, the coming falcon, evidently attracted by the lure—which would offer but little inducement to a really wild hawk—passed in front of us, within a distance of twenty yards; and as she passed my falconer (she was mute till then) she loudly repeated her angry chatter of dislike and anger, and continued it till she was out of sight.

This was the last I ever saw of the "Queen of Sheba;" but as the occurrence took place in the spring, and a female peregrine wearing jesses was constantly seen on Salisbury Cathedral by the inhabitants of the Close (notably by Canon Swayne, well known to me), it is possible that this was our

lost hawk. Indeed, she may have been the owner of certain peregrine's eggs found about this time on the leads of the cathedral ; for a pair of peregrines frequented the spire at that time, and might perhaps have hatched and brought up young there, but for the fact that the eggs, as I have heard, were taken by one of the choir-boys.¹ An escaped hawk will always get rid of her bells sooner than the jesses, which, indeed, are attached to the legs in too ingenious a manner to be easily discarded.

¹ In *The Zoologist* for January 1882 the Rev. Canon Morres, of Salisbury, has given an interesting account of the peregrine falcons which have for many years resorted to the spire of the cathedral in that historic city. He first noticed them in 1864 or 1865 ; since which time they have been constantly seen by himself and others, and their eggs have been several times found in the gutters on the top of the tower, 207 feet high. They often rest on the spire, which from its great height (400 feet to the weathercock) naturally affords them complete security. The first egg was taken in 1878, and the following spring two others were picked up and are now in the Salisbury Museum. Since then the staircase of the tower has been kept strictly private, and no one is allowed to ascend without special permission of the Dean ; so that the birds are now left in absolute safety and quietness. Canon Morres has since announced in *The Field* (3rd October 1896) that he has several times seen falcons circling round the spire, and long may they find protection there.

WILLIAM BRODRICK

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"FALCONRY IN THE BRITISH ISLANDS"

DIED DEC. 1888, AGED 74



MEMOIR OF WILLIAM BRODRICK

JOINT AUTHOR WITH FRANCIS HENRY SALVIN OF
"FALCONRY IN THE BRITISH ISLANDS"

AS one who, by his published works and private enterprise, has done perhaps more than any of his generation to popularise and encourage the art of falconry in England, the name of William Brodrick deserves to be remembered. Born in London, where his father was a barrister of some eminence, William Brodrick was educated at Harrow and University College, Oxford; and although he was wont to say, *à propos* of his lifelong love for natural history, that "all he learned at Harrow was how to catch birds," yet, as he took his degree at Oxford, it is clear that he must have learned something more. He studied medicine at Edinburgh, but never chose to practise, and after his marriage he settled at Belford, in Northumberland, where he enjoyed the great advantage, to a young and enthusiastic beginner in falconry, of hawking over the moor of his uncle, Mr. Selby, of Twizel, whose name with ornithologists is "a household word." In those early days he procured, trained, and used very successfully many fine eyess falcons and tiercels; peregrines from the Northern coasts, notably one from St. Abb's Head, Berwickshire; and when,

later on, he moved to the south of England, and resided at Bath and Ilfracombe, he for several years procured young peregrines from Lundy Island, discovering, like every other falconer who has been lucky enough to obtain birds from this well-known eyrie, that a Lundy hawk is a falconer's treasure.

After leaving Ilfracombe Mr. Brodrick settled at Chudleigh, but the neighbourhood there being quite unsuited to the practice of his favourite sport, he had reluctantly to give it up, and solaced himself by keeping, as pets, most, if not all, of the hawks and falcons usually employed in modern falconry, except the Indian luggers and shaheens. Under his care, examples of the Greenland, Iceland, and Norwegian gerfalcons, sakers, and lanners lived for years, a source of admiration to all who saw them.

But it is as a writer on falconry, and an admirable draughtsman and painter of birds of prey, that Mr. Brodrick was and will be widely known. In 1855, in conjunction with his old friend Captain F. H. Salvin (who from his lifelong devotion to falconry may well be called the father of the craft in England), he brought out the first edition of that much admired work "Falconry in the British Isles," the capital illustrations to which were all drawn by him from the life, the letterpress being the joint production of Captain Salvin and himself, and, like the plates, a labour of love. The figures of hawks are in their way inimitable, and bear comparison with the best work of his friend and only rival in the same line, the accomplished animal painter Joseph Wolf. The letterpress has only one fault,

that of being too short. It contains, however, almost all that modern falconers deem essential to be told, the works of the old masters—even the best of them—being overladen with errors, notably in the many fanciful and absurd recipes for the cure of real or imaginary diseases in hawks. In this direction it must be confessed the work above mentioned does not err, though modern falconers would yet be grateful for a somewhat longer pharmacopœia than is therein contained. In 1873 a second edition of this work appeared through the same publisher (Van Voorst), when, the original lithographic stones having been destroyed, the plates were redrawn by Mr. Brodrick, with some additions. Previously to this, however, namely in 1865, the same hand had produced a charming series of folio plates of hawks, entitled “Falconers’ Favourites,” in which he gave life-sized coloured figures of a famous tiercel, “Comet,” from Lundy, and “Hurricane,” a Dutch passage falcon of Major Fisher’s, with other portraits of goshawk and sparrowhawk, hobby and merlin. Nor did Mr. Brodrick’s talent end here. A life-long study of the habits and attitudes of birds of prey, in motion and at rest, coupled with unusual skill as a taxidermist, resulted in the production of some of the most remarkable groups of stuffed birds with which we are acquainted. With the exception of his friend Mr. John Hancock, of Newcastle, no amateur in this line has ever rivalled him in his best efforts. His house was full of stuffed birds, and some of his finest cases, having to be moved for

want of room, were lent for exhibition to the museums of Bath and Exeter, where, it is to be hoped, they will be allowed to remain. Nor were the smaller kinds of birds neglected. Of canaries especially Mr. Brodrick was an excellent judge and successful exhibitor, possessing the purest, and latterly almost the only, representatives of that singular variety known as the "London Fancy." Like all admirers of this particular strain of late years, he found them sterile, and troublesome to breed and rear, and towards the end they dwindled down to one or two, and finally became extinct, for it is believed that there are not now to be found any good representatives of this once much-prized breed. It is curious that all young "London Fancies," until their first moult, externally resemble young "Lizards"; but while the "Lizard" undergoes no material change of colour or markings, the London canary changes from the sober hue of a brown-spangled bird (like a linnet) to a splendid deep uniform yellow, or equally fine buff or pale yellow colour, with black wings and tail, and ever after so remains.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Brodrick's shy and retiring disposition prevented his talents from being more widely recognised and appreciated, and it will probably surprise many to learn that he has left behind him some of the most remarkable drawings (many of them coloured) of the external form and internal structure of British mollusca and sea anemones which have perhaps been ever prepared under high microscopic power—a feat the difficulty of

which is well known to all who have attempted a similar task.

At the age of seventy-four Mr. Brodrick died, on December 21, 1888, at Littlehill, Chudleigh, North Devon, where he had lived for more than twenty years, esteemed by all who knew him. Having formerly held the command of the Chudleigh Volunteers, a number of his old corps, commanded by Colonel Lord Clifford, attended his funeral, eight of the non-commissioned officers officiating as bearers.

His old friend Francis Henry Salvin, companion in many a hawking excursion, and witness with him of many a splendid flight, still survives, like the writer of these lines, to deplore his loss. As the names of both these "companions in arms" must always live in the memory of those who have read or profited by the perusal of their beautiful work "*Falconry in the British Islands*," so the writer of the foregoing pages, in bringing this volume to a close, desires no other recompense than to be remembered with them—his old friends—as one who, in his love for Falconry, has striven, perhaps not unsuccessfully, to encourage its practice and uphold its traditions.

FAREWELL

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